THE DOCTRINE OF INDIVIDUALITY: A STUDY OF THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS IN THE WORKS OF D.H. LAWRENCE

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CONTENTS

CONTENTS

CHAPTER SIX

THE DOCTRINE OF INDIVIDUALITY AND LAWRENCE'S ART

THE DOCTRINE OF INDIVIDUALITY AND LAWRENCE'S ART

For the statement of what Lawrence meant by the doctrine of individuality we relied in the last chapter for the most part on his expository prose writings in which he gives explicit evidence of his thinking. Yet Lawrence is primarily an artist and it is in his art that one finds the most valuable expression of the doctrine. The expository writings are in the last analysis an attempt to find some sort of logical attitude towards life as he intuitively perceives it in the novels, stories, and poems. It is the latter that give the doctrine flesh and blood.

That the presentation of life in terms of individual fulfillment is the major preoccupation of Lawrence's art has been very recently noted by F.R. Leavis in his latest book on Lawrence as a novelist. In writing about Lawrence's novel, The Rainbow, Leavis makes this very significant point:

> Life is 'fulfilled' in the individual or nowhere; but without a true marital relation, which is creative in more than the sense of producing children, there can be no 'fulfillment': that is the burden of Lawrence's art. It is in the establishment of a sure relation with the 'beyond' that the creativeness of a valid marriage has its inclusive manifestation. What the word 'beyond', with the associated 'fulfillment' and the associated symbol, the rainbow, points to is what all the varied resources of Lawrence's dramatic poem are devoted to defining.[1]

The individual is Lawrence's constant preoccupation not only

in The Rainbow but in all his major works. The doctrine of individuality is no mere theoretical assertion; it has its concrete embodiment in the art form.

I: Look! We Have Come Through!

The first literary work which we are going to examine in order to show how the doctrine of individuality finds expression in Lawrence's art is Look! We Have Come Through! The poems which constitute this book have for their theme the struggle between a man and a woman for a meaningful relationship. Lawrence does not claim that the man and woman finally succeed in achieving a perfect relationship, but he does indicate that a great deal of progress has been made in the right direction. The struggle to establish the relationship is shown in all its complexities. The woman, in the poems, has been married and, having left her husband, is now trying to start life anew with the man. The poems do not follow a definite sequence or artistic scheme for they are the spontaneous utterances from the poet's pen; there has been no attempt made to fit the poems into any sort of unified poetic work. Nevertheless, it is possible for the reader to follow the struggle between the

man and the woman and thereby to gain an insight into the nature of that struggle. At the same time the reader can draw certain conclusions from the struggle which may be regarded as Lawrence's commentary on human relationships in general. The personal struggle of the man and woman in the poems is Lawrence's way of informing us of his own conclusions based on the poetic experiences of Look! We Have Come Through!

The autobiographical subject matter of Look! We Have Come Through! is of little importance in the present study except in so far as it indicates that what Lawrence is writing about is based on actual experience rather than on hypothetical considerations. The authenticity of the experience does, in the last analysis, contribute to the significance of what Lawrence says. The personal experience recorded in the poems also reveals how well aware Lawrence was of the numerous difficulties which must inevitably be overcome in the establishment of any worthwhile relationship between a man and a woman. This fact has sometimes been overlooked in the adverse criticisms of Lawrence's views on human relationships.

If we take the poems as a whole we can find several conclusions which are pertinent to the doctrine of individuality.

The central ideas of the doctrine are given very clear expression in the poem called "Manifesto". In this poem Lawrence pauses to sum up his "red-letter thanksgivings" and to formulate that which is as yet unrealized in his relationship with the woman. He is grateful only to his wife who in her own generosity has enabled him to satisfy his hunger for woman, a hunger which, Lawrence says, "we must learn to satisfy with pure, real satisfaction;/ or perish, there is no alternative".[2] The satisfaction of the hunger for woman is not sufficient in itself; the woman, like the man, must come to realize the supreme <u>otherness</u> of the counterpart in the relationship. Even for Lawrence in the poem, the satisfaction of his hunger for woman was not an easy accomplishment owing to the inner resistances which he had built up prior to his meeting with Frieda. His inability to take her love results from fear and the sense of shame which he has suffered from in the past. Finally, the man's desire is said to have been satisfied, which leads Lawrence to remark as follows:[3]

> Let them praise desire who will,
> but only fulfillment will do,
> real fulfillment, nothing short.

But even the fulfillment of desire still leaves something more; it leaves, as Lawrence puts it, "This ache for being..."[4]

The genuine satisfaction of man's sexual needs is not enough; sexual fulfillment is the condition for coming into being or achieving individuality. The achievement of individuality is held to be the final purpose of all existence.

In order to achieve her individuality the woman must come to know the man as he has come to know her, to surpass herself by realizing that he is all beyond her, just as the man has come to know that "ultimately she is all beyond me,/ she is all not-me, ultimately". This realization is Lawrence's insistence on the concept of otherness which must, he tells us time and time again, be the guiding principle in the establishment of all the relationships of man with the rest of the universe. It is only through recognizing the otherness of all the things with which we come into contact that we can finally come to our own fulfillment. In the poem the woman has not realized that the man is "the other" for she still "touches [him] as if [he] were herself, her own".[5] Once, however, she comes to know him as he has come to know her, the relationship will have been established and the way to the achievement of individuality will be opened. The goal of individuality is expressed by Lawrence in these words:[6]

Then, we shall be two and distinct, we shall have
each our separate being.
And that will be pure existence, real liberty.
Till then, we are confused, a mixture, unresolved,
unextricated one from the other.
It is in pure, unutterable resolvedness, distinction
of being, that one is free,
not in mixing, merging, not in similarity.
When she has put her hand on my secret, darkest
sources, the darkest outgoings,
when it has struck home to her, like death,
"this is <u>him</u>!"
she has no part in it, no part whatever,
it is the terrible <u>other</u>,
when she knows, the fearful <u>other flesh</u>, ah
darkness unfathomable and fearful, contiguous
and concrete,
when she is slain against me, and lies in a heap
like one outside the house,
when she passes away as I have passed away,
being pressed up against the other,
then I shall be glad, I shall not be confused with
her,
I shall be cleared, distinct, single as if burnished
in silver,
having no adherence, no adhesion anywhere,
one clear, burnished, isolated being, unique,
and she also, pure, isolated, complete,
two of us, unutterably distinguished, and in unutterable
conjunction.

Then we shall be free, freer than the angels, ah,
perfect.

It is Lawrence's wish that every human being come to his own fulfillment, to his "own pure single being", and he insists that it is only this state of man that can ultimately give meaning to human life. "Every man himself, and therefore, a surpassing singleness of mankind."[7]

"Manifesto" is the fourth last poem of <u>Look! We Have</u>

Come Through! and in my opinion it represents a sort of final attempt to bring together the meaning of the other poems included in the book. It represents, as it were, what the poet has learned about life through the struggle which he and the woman have undergone. Thus the last poem in the collection, "Craving For Spring", reveals that the poet feels that he and the woman have weathered the storm and that all that need happen now is spring which would usher in all life in the world and so bring each and every thing to its own fulness of being. If only the rest of the world would learn what the man and woman have learned it would be spring, "...in the world of the living;/ wonderment organising itself, heralding itself with the violets,/ stirring of new seasons."[8]

There are a number of other poems in the book which serve to elaborate some of the key ideas in "Manifesto". One of these poems is that called "Wedlock" which like "Manifesto" is concerned with the relationship between man and woman. The emphasis in "Wedlock" is on the necessity of looking upon the relationship as constituting a sufficient goal in itself without requiring that anything issue from the union of the man and woman. It may be that only happiness will come from their union, but even if that were the case,

it is enough. The important thing is the condition of wonder which has grown up between the two and has finally given strength to them both. The condition of wonder is made possible by the recognition of the principle of <u>otherness</u>.

> And yet all the while you are you, you are not me.
> And I am I, I am never you.
> How awfully distinct and far off from each other's
> being we are!
>
> Yet I am glad.
> I am so glad there is always you beyond my scope,
> Something that stands over,
> Something I shall never be,
> That I shall always wonder over, and wait for,
> Look for like the breath of life as long as I live,
> Still waiting for you, however old you are, and I am,
> I shall always wonder over you, and look for you.
>
> And you will always be with me.
> I shall never cease to be filled with newness,
> Having you near me.

Lawrence further points out that one must yield to the unknown which is working through us at all times. In the poem, "Song Of A Man Who Has Come Through", he shows that one is not responsible for his own creation. "Not I, not I, but the wind that blows through me!"[9] What man must do is be sensitive to that which is trying to issue through him.

> Oh, for the wonder that bubbles into my soul,
> I would be a good fountain, a good well-head,
> Would blur no whisper, spoil no expression.

In the poem, "New Heaven And Earth", the same idea is given expression and once again Lawrence asks that he bear the wind well:

> Sightless and strong oblivion in utter life take
> possession of me!
> The unknown strong current of life supreme
> drowns me and sweeps me away and holds me down
> to the sources of mystery, in the depths,
> extinguishes there my risen resurrected life
> and kindles it further at the core of utter mystery.

The poems of Look! We Have Come Through! are really a reassertion of the doctrine of individuality. They probe the question of man's relation with woman and show that even this all important relationship is only the condition under which man's ultimate purpose in life can be achieved. The poems state in a very personal way the necessity of honesty in the recognition of the principle of otherness and they reveal the inadequacy of merging and self love. They emphasize the need for wonder in man's relationship with woman without which the relationship becomes meaningless. Finally, the poems give symbolical expression of the goal of individuality best shown in the poem called "I Am Like A Rose". The goal is expressed as follows:

> I am myself at last; now I achieve
> My very self. I, with wonder mellow,
> Full of the fine warmth, I issue forth in clear
> And single me, perfected from my fellow.

Here I am all myself. No rose-bush heaving
Its limpid sap to culmination has brought
Itself more sheer and naked out of the green
In stark clear roses, than I to myself am brought.

II: The Rainbow

Look! We Have Come Through! was published for the first time in December 1917, but many of the poems were written at least five years before when Lawrence and Frieda left England and went away to Europe. Lawrence's first really significant novel, Sons and Lovers, was published in May 1913 so that the experiences embodied in the Look! poems were already his when he was writing the novel. Sons and Lovers, however, does not reflect the doctrine of individuality in the same way as the succeeding novels although Paul Morel in the novel does behave in accordance with the main tenets of the doctrine. The experience of the Look! poems served to confirm or to bring to reality that which Lawrence is more or less inarticulately trying to get at in Sons and Lovers. A very great change had taken place in Lawrence during the final stages of writing Sons and Lovers so that he himself recognized that he would never write in the manner of that novel again. This change was the direct result of his experience with Frieda and

Lawrence pointed out that henceforth his work would include what both of them had learned. Harry T. Moore draws attention to the change as follows:

> In Lawrence's fourth and fifth novels, The Rainbow and Women in Love--originally intended to be a single book--he began writing in a new way. The change had been prefigured in his poetry, in the verse composed while he was working on the final version of Sons and Lovers: poems later included in the volume entitled Look! We Have Come Through![10]

The Rainbow and the following novels are different works of art because by this time Lawrence has formulated quite definitely the doctrine of individuality and the expression of this doctrine demands the creation of a new art form.

We are not here concerned with a detailed analysis of the art form of Lawrence's novels, but with showing how the doctrine of individuality finds expression in the novels. What we wish to emphasize is that the characters in the novels live or perish in accordance with whether they assent to, or dissent from, the doctrine of individuality. Time and time again Lawrence stresses the importance of the individual fulfillment of the characters and it is this preoccupation with individual fulfillment that makes the novels significant. Whatever else his characters may be, they are individuals who are shown striving to live

meaningful lives, and only those succeed who have the courage to achieve their individualities. Those forces which work against the attainment of individuality must be vanquished for that which is always at stake is nothing less than life itself.

F.R. Leavis has pointed out that Lawrence's "intuition expresses itself in an intensity of preoccupation with the individual." Leavis refers to The Rainbow and to Women in Love to indicate the manifestations of Lawrence's genius in this regard when he says:

> No one could have been more profoundly possessed by the perception that life is a matter of individual lives, and that except in individual lives there is no life to be interested in or reverent about, and no life to be served. No one could have been more incapable than he in any mood of finding any felicity of meaning in 'the greatest good of the greatest number' (a phrase significantly associated with the failure in Anton Skrebensky). His sense of that truth which in Women in Love he emphasizes with the word 'disquality' makes itself felt everywhere in his work as a kind of steady religious passion.
>
> The oneness of life; the separateness and irreducible otherness of lives; the supreme importance of "fulfillment" in the individual, because here (if not here, nowhere) is life--the peculiar Laurentian genius manifests itself in the intensity, constancy and fulness of the intuition.[11]

In a previous chapter we looked at the conflict in The Rainbow between Will and Anna Brangwen in an effort to reconstruct the part played by Christianity in the formulation

of Lawrence's own doctrine. We also examined Ursula Brangwen's religious misgivings and indicated that in the creation of her character, particularly in its religious elements, Lawrence was probably drawing on his own experience. If now we look at The Rainbow as a novel which has meaning apart from Lawrence's own experiences we will get a better idea of what it is that Lawrence is trying to convey to his readers.

The inclusion of three generations of Brangwens is Lawrence's way of showing that although lives are individual, life itself is continuous. Against the background of the changing English countryside each pair of lovers in each generation try to work out their individual "salvations". In the first generation we see Lydia and Tom Brangwen struggle for fulfillment. They succeed in establishing that relationship which is based on the doctrine of individuality. They come to recognize the supreme otherness of one another so that even after two years of married life and in spite of the fact that Lydia was formerly married to Paul Lensky both of them retain their individualities and meet in the supreme consummation. Appropriately, Lawrence gives their consummation a religious context, thus indicating the impossibility of separating the doctrine of individuality

from the intrinsic nature of God. When he describes the fulfillment of Lydia and Tom Brangwen he underlines the essence of this fulfillment by saying that God has finally declared Himself to them. The state of fulfillment is described by Lawrence in these words:

> Their coming together now, after two years of married life, was much more wonderful to them than it had been before. It was the entry to another circle of existence, it was baptism to another life, it was the complete confirmation. Their feet trod strange ground of knowledge, their footsteps were lit up with discovery. Wherever they walked, it was well, the world re-echoed round them in discovery. They went gladly and forgetful. Everything was lost, and everything was found. The new world was discovered, it remained only to be explored.
>
> They had passed through the doorway into the further space, where movement was so big, that it was complete liberty. She was the doorway to him, he to her. At last they had thrown open the doors, each to the other, and had stood in the doorways facing each other, whilst the light flooded out from behind on to each of their faces, it was the transfiguration, the glorification, the admission.
>
> And always the light of the transfiguration burned on in their hearts. He went his way as before, she went her way, to the rest of the world there seemed no change. But to the two of them, there was the perpetual world of the transfiguration.
>
> He did not know her any better, any more precisely, now that he knew her altogether. Poland, her husband, the war--he understood no more of this in her. He did not understand her foreign nature, half German, half Polish, nor her foreign speech. But he knew her, he knew her meaning, without understanding. What she said, what she spoke, this was a blind gesture on her part. In herself she walked strong and clear, he knew her, he saluted her, was with her. What was memory after all, but the recording of a number of possibilities which have never been fulfilled? What was Paul Lensky to her, but an

> unfulfilled possibility to which he, Brangwen, was the reality and the fulfillment? What did it matter, that Anna Lensky was born of Lydia and Paul? God was her father and her mother, He had passed through the married pair without fully making Himself known to them.
>
> Now He was declared to Brangwen and to Lydia Brangwen, as they stood together. When at last they had joined hands, the house was finished, and the Lord took up his abode. And they were glad.[12]

After having thus described the nature of Lydia's and Tom's fulfillment Lawrence leaves them and goes on to trace the growth of Anna Brangwen, the daughter of Lydia and her first husband. Anna is a strange child. "She never was quite sure, in herself, whether she were wrong, or whether the others were wrong."[13] As she grows older she develops a certain kind of pride and indifference to those around her so that at sixteen she is "a lofty demoiselle...plagued by her family shortcomings".[14] What seems to lie at the root of Anna's growing discontent is the fact that she does not feel safe within that religion which she has inherited from her mother. Although Mrs. Brangwen's beliefs are not clearly defined, they do serve her adequately. Lawrence says of the mother's religion:

> She had some beliefs somewhere, never defined. She had been brought up a Roman Catholic. She had gone to the Church of England for protection. The

> outward form was a matter of indifference to her. Yet she had some fundamental religion. It was as if she worshipped God as a mystery, never seeking in the least to define what He was.
>
> And inside her the subtle sense of the Great Absolute wherein she had her being was very strong. The English dogma never reached her: the language was too foreign.
>
> Through it all she felt the great Separator who held life in His hands, gleaming, imminent, terrible, the Great Mystery, immediate beyond all telling.
>
> She shone and gleamed to the Mystery, Whom she knew through all her senses, she glanced with strange, mystic superstitions that never found expression in the English language, never mounted to thought in English. But so she lived, within a potent, sensuous belief that included her family and contained her destiny.[15]

It is this religious view of life that enables Lydia and Tom Brangwen to find fulfillment, this yielding of themselves as it were to the "Great Mystery" of which they are the incarnation. But it is also the lack of this kind of religious feeling on Anna's part that stirs in her the multiplicity of conflicts which form the substance of the succeeding chapters of the novel. Unlike her mother she can understand the words of the dogma, and the words give her little comfort. Lawrence describes her state thus:

> She became an assiduous church-goer. But the <u>language</u> meant nothing to her: it seemed false. She hated to hear things expressed, put into words. Whilst the religious feelings were inside her they

were passionately moving. In the mouth of the clergyman, they were false, indecent.[16]

Anna's views of religion at this time foreshadow her later conflict with Will Brangwen. And her reaction against the kind of Christianity that Will stands for is Lawrence's own criticism of the faith.

Unlike the relationship of Lydia and Tom Brangwen which forms the subject matter of the first part of the novel, the relationship between Will and Anna Brangwen is not a success. Why it is not a success, as we shall soon see, is that Will Brangwen fails to live up to the doctrine of individuality. What stands in the way to his fulfillment is his inability to accept his own identity as having meaning in itself as well as his inability to accept Anna's otherness. His whole failure is intimately tied up with his religious beliefs which place a kind of limitation upon him and thus prevent him from coming to his fulness of being.

When Anna first meets Will she is described attending a church service with him. Her conduct during the service is vividly related by Lawrence so that it takes on a very important place in the developing relationship between the two young people. What Anna in fact does during the

service is nothing less than laugh at Will's religious feelings which has the effect of showing up the difference which is inherent in their respective makeups. The gap which is thus revealed to us by Lawrence's skilful literary technique is never really filled in and it is, as time goes on, widened and becomes irreconcilable. Will Brangwen's interest in Gothic helps to emphasize his spiritual nature as contrasted with Anna's spontaneous being. His whole personality is shown as one which wants things to be permanently fixed while Anna's nature is such that she is very much able to accept change.

The will in Will Brangwen (and I think the name is consciously chosen by Lawrence) is in complete control of his being. When he decides to marry Anna, it is an act of his will which looks upon marriage as "the solution, now fixed ahead".[17] Lawrence says of him quite explicitly, "He was abstract, purely a fixed will."[18] Will has his existence too much in the outside world, in that world where the conscious will plays such a great part. Even after he marries Anna he is unable to accept the all-importance of the moment as his wife is able to do; Will wants the world never to change.

The cottage in which the newlyweds take up their life

together is significantly located next to the church so that the "old, little church, with its small spire on the square tower, seemed to be looking back at the cottage windows."[19] We suspect that the marriage will always have over it this shadow of the church; in actual fact, it will have Will's religion to contend with. Will cares more about the church than he does about his own self. This is what drives the two lovers further and further apart as the narrative progresses. We read, "He did not care about himself as a human being."[20] This attitude on Will's part stems from his religious beliefs which become the cause of Anna's increasing antagonism towards him. Lawrence sums up Anna's feelings as follows:

> It exasperated her beyond measure. She could not get out of the Church the satisfaction he got. The thought of her soul was intimately mixed up with the thought of her own self. Indeed, her soul and her own self were one and the same in her. Whereas he seemed simply to ignore the fact of his own self, almost to refute it. He had a soul--a dark, inhuman thing caring nothing for humanity. So she conceived it. And in the gloom and the mystery of the Church his soul lived and ran free, like some strange, underground thing, abstract.
>
> He was very strange to her, and, in this Church spirit, in conceiving himself as a soul, he seemed to escape and run free of her. In a way she envied him, this dark freedom and jubilation of the soul, some strange entity in him. It fascinated her. Again she hated it. And again, she despised him, wanted to destroy it in him.[21]

We have elsewhere examined in detail the religious conflict between Anna and Will Brangwen, and so at this time we need only mention that one by one Will is forced to give up certain beliefs as Anna assails them until his religion becomes at the end a kind of meaningless activity in which he engages more or less automatically.[22] Lawrence's meaning is plain. What he is in effect saying is that Will Brangwen cannot come to his fulfillment because he persists in holding on to a meaningless concept of life which is embodied in his particular type of Christianity.

The ecstatic days just after the marriage soon give way to recurrent spells of hatred and black rage. Will never succeeds in achieving an inner state of peace or fulfillment. Anna likewise is always aware of some lack in the relationship which she diagnoses as stemming from Will's desire to impose himself upon her and thus merge the two of them into one. Lawrence says, "The surety, the surety, the inner surety, the confidence in the abidingness of love: that was what she wanted. And that she did not get. She knew also that he had not got it."[23] Again Lawrence says, "He did not alter, he remained separately himself, and he seemed to expect her to be a part of himself, the

"extension of his will."[24]

Will Brangwen, as we now see, is contradicting the doctrine of individuality; he refuses to admit that every living thing is ultimately a separate entity and as such must come to its own fulfillment by achieving its own individuality. Anna's mother speaks Lawrence's own thoughts when she says,

> Remember, child...that everything is not waiting for your hand just to take or leave. You mustn't expect it. Between two people, the love itself is the important thing, and that is neither you nor him. It is a third thing you must create. You mustn't expect it to be just your way.[25]

It is this concept of love which makes the doctrine of individuality possible that Will Brangwen is unable to understand. It is Will and not Anna who falls short of the basic requirements in the journey towards fulfillment.

Will Brangwen is afraid of being alone which is another way of saying that he is afraid of achieving his own self. He depends too much on Anna so that without her he is lost and when she tells him that she is going to have a baby he sees himself once more separated from her. He would like them always to be one. Lawrence writes:

> They continued without saying any more, walking along opposite horizons, hand in hand across the

> intervening space, two separate people. And he trembled as if a wind blew on to him in strong gusts, out of the unseen. He was afraid. He was afraid to know he was alone. For she seemed fulfilled and separate and sufficient in her half of the world. He could not bear to know that he was cut off. Why could he not always be one with her? It was he who had given her the child. Why could she not be with him, one with him? Why must he be set in this separateness, why could she not be with him, close, close, as one with him? She must be one with him.[26]

But to be "one with him" is to deny the doctrine of individuality and thus Will Brangwen is destined to suffer and to find no fulfillment. After much suffering he does learn at last to be alone, to accept his own aloneness. He is forced by Anna very brutally to accept his own identity particularly during her pregnancy which has the effect of making her more self-sufficient than ever. She forces him to relax his hold upon her, to relax his will so that finally he is able to be alone. Lawrence describes Will's condition in these words:

> He would insist no more, he would force her no more. He would force himself upon her no more. He would let go, relax, lapse, and what would be, should be....
>
> Yet he must be able to be alone. He must be able to lie down alongside the empty space, and let be. He must be able to leave himself to the flood, to sink or live as might be. For he recognized at length his own limitation, and the limitation of his power. He had to give in....

> He could sleep with her, and let her be. He could be alone now. He had just learned what it was to be alone. It was right and peaceful. She had given him a new, deeper freedom. The world might be a welter of uncertainty, but he was himself now. He had come into his own existence. He was born for a second time, born at last unto himself, out of the vast body of humanity. Now at last he had a separate identity, he existed alone, even if he were not quite alone. Before he had only existed in so far as he had relations with another human being. Now he had an absolute self--as well as a relative self.[27]

With the birth of the baby Anna experiences a large measure of fulfillment. "Yet still she was not quite fulfilled. She had a slight expectant feeling, as of a door half-opened."[28] She realizes this fact, but she accepts her lot and looks towards the child as the one who might ultimately come to complete fulfillment. "With satisfaction she relinquished the adventure to the unknown. She was bearing her children."[29]

The renewal of conflict between Will and Anna comes when they pay a visit to the cathedral at Lincoln. The cathedral symbolizes Will's religious beliefs and stands for his way of consummation. Anna herself experiences a strange thrill when she enters the cathedral, but she is unable to accept it as something Absolute. In a scene which recalls that which was described when they first

attended a church service together she spoils Will's absorption in the visit to Lincoln by pointing to the carvings at which she laughs with pleasure. As Lawrence puts it, "even in the dazed swoon of the cathedral, she claimed another right. The altar was barren, its lights gone out. God burned no more in that bush."[30] Thus she succeeds in demolishing Will's absolute as it is symbolized for him in the structure of the cathedral and he is forced to accept it for what it tries to represent rather than for what it does represent. He goes back to the little church next to their cottage and continues to look after repairing the "stone and woodwork, mending the organ and restoring a piece of broken carving, repairing the church furniture."[31] His life, like his religion, does not bring out anything truly creative. Lawrence comments:

> His life was shifting its centre, becoming more superficial. He had failed to become really articulate, failed to find real expression. He had to continue in the old form. But in spirit, he was uncreated.[32]

Lacking any sort of real creative activity, Will Brangwen has yet again failed to live up to the doctrine of individuality. His wife at least is able to bear children and in this sense she is creative, but as a man

Will has no such corresponding activity. He tries to content himself with the idea that his wife, the baby, and he are one, and that what is between him and his wife, if not everything, is a great thing. But he does not find fulfillment. Lawrence says:

> In the house, he served his wife and the little matriarchy. She loved him because he was the father of her children. And she always had a physical passion for him. So he gave up trying to have the spiritual superiority and control, or even her respect for his conscious public life. He lived simply by her physical love for him. And he served the little matriarchy, nursing the child and helping with the housework, indifferent any more of his own dignity and importance. But his abandoning of claims, his living isolated upon his own interest, made him seem unreal, unimportant.[33]

Will Brangwen does not lead a vital life. Lawrence describes him as a "lover who knows he is betrayed, but who still loves, whose love is only the more tense. The church was false, but he served it the more attentively."[34]

The final picture of Will Brangwen is a sad one. Lawrence shows him as a man who has ceased to mean anything as an individual, one who will never come to his own individuality. He has plenty of activities, but no meaningful activity in which he might have his being; he is merely occupied, but not really alive. Lawrence's picture of him is this:

> He was aware of some limit to himself, of something unformed in his very being, of some buds which were not ripe in him, some folded centres of darkness which would never develop and unfold whilst he was alive in the body. He was unready for fulfillment. Something undeveloped in him limited him, there was a darkness in him which he could not unfold, which would never unfold in him.[35]

The main character in the drama of the third generation of Brangwens is Ursula, the grand-daughter of Lydia and Tom Brangwen. It is through the presentation of Ursula's development that we learn of the supreme importance which Lawrence places upon individual fulfillment. Although we never witness Ursula's success in the achievement of individuality and thus fulfillment, there are a great number of important considerations which are revealed in her story, considerations which are essential in an attempt to understand what the doctrine of individuality implies in day to day terms of human life. Ursula is pitted against almost insurmountable obstacles which she must overcome if ever she is to become her self.

The social forces or institutions which stand in the way of Ursula's fulfillment are shown to be inherent in the changing and changed conditions of English society in the last two decades of the nineteenth century; it hardly need be added that these are the conditions under

which Lawrence himself grew up. The Rainbow, consequently, becomes not only a novel which probes the depths of human feelings, but at the same time it is a commentary on current economic, social, political, educational, and religious as well as philosophical ideas. Lawrence's probings of the society wrought by the industrial revolution are important for they embody those conditions under which Ursula must try to achieve her own individuality. One suspects that what Lawrence is really doing in The Rainbow, as is indeed true of all his novels, is putting the doctrine of individuality to a test by using the novelist's medium.

The first battle that Ursula must win is that against the established religious framework in which she grows up. We have already witnessed the inadequacy of this framework to provide a satisfactory raison d'être for Will Brangwen, her father, so that the effect of witnessing its failure again in the case of Ursula is that of emphasizing the point. It is also Lawrence's way of showing how the religious beliefs of one generation can become the stumbling block for those of the following generations. In the third chapter of this study we traced in detail Ursula's religious struggle and suggested that in the presentation of her case Lawrence is probably

drawing on his own experiences. Ursula's sincerity in her desire to live up to the Christian ethic is so vividly portrayed that one can hardly doubt the authenticity of personal experience in the account. But whether or not Ursula's religious struggles are those of the young Lawrence, they are an important step in her greater struggle, namely, that of achieving her self.

The religion in which she wants to believe, which she hesitates to criticize before repudiating, has the effect in the end of making Ursula feel that it is all somehow degrading. "There was something unclean and degrading about this humble side of Christianity. Ursula suddenly revolted to the other extreme."[36] When Ursula tries to translate the vision into week-day terms she begins to feel guilty and ashamed. "Yet she must have it in week-day terms--she must. For all her life was a week-day life, now, this was the whole."[37] The shame and guilt which are produced in her soul are described by Lawrence in this way:

> So she craved for the breast of the Son of Man, to lie there. And she was ashamed in her soul, ashamed. For whereas Christ spoke for the Vision to answer, she answered from the weekday fact. It was a betrayal, a transference of meaning, from the vision world, to the matter-of-fact world. So she was ashamed of her religious ecstasy, and dreaded

lest anyone should see it.[38]

Thus by the time Ursula is sixteen she has come to hate religion. Lawrence says,

> She hated religion because it lent itself to her confusion. She abused everything. She wanted to become hard, indifferent, brutally callous to everything but just the immediate need, the immediate satisfaction. To have a yearning towards Jesus, only that she might use him to pander to her own soft sensation, use him as a means for reacting upon herself, maddened her in the end. There was then no Jesus, no sentimentality. With all the bitter hatred of helplessness she hated sentimentality.[39]

It is at this time that Ursula first meets the young Skrebensky. Lawrence says, "She laid hold of him at once for her dreams."[40] But what sort of a person is Skrebensky? Will he be able to fulfill those dreams? Our first impression of him is not a favorable one. There is in Lawrence's characterization of Skrebensky a recurring reference to his ugliness so that one hardly expects him to be the man who will bring Ursula to fulfillment. Almost too readily Skrebensky admits that the army is something behind which he hides. He says, "They say all the brains of the army are in the Engineers. I think that's why I joined them--to get the credit of other people's brains."[41] In her eagerness to make Skrebensky conform to what she

wants in a man, Ursula credits him with many qualities which later turn out to be merely habits which he has learned. Thus his individuality which she at first perceives to be such an admirable quality later turns out to be a mask for the intrinsically shallow and nonexistent being which Skrebensky is at heart. The Anton Skrebensky who "could not beg" as seen in Ursula's first impression of him turns out later to be anything but the soul who can stand alone. Not that Ursula does not sense in the beginning that there is something wrong with Skrebensky's character. "A chill went over Ursula. Was he going to sell himself in some way?"[42] Nevertheless, Ursula throws in her lot with Skrebensky, not so much out of genuine love for him as out of self-love. Lawrence describes her thoughts thus:

> She was thrilled with a new life. For the first time she was in love with a vision of herself: she saw as it were a fine little reflection of herself in his eyes. And she must act up to this: she must be beautiful. Her thoughts turned quickly to clothes, her passion was to make a beautiful appearance.[43]

In the very beginnings of their relationship Ursula and Skrebensky contradict the doctrine of individuality: he, in his merging of his identity with that of the army mass,

and she, in her conscious desire to live up to a pattern rather than according to the deep passional self within her.

The eventual failure of their relationship is presaged in the scene where Ursula and Skrebensky leave the fair and look inside the large church where she finds " the immemorial gloom full of bits of falling plaster, and dust of floating plaster, smelling of old lime...." [44] It is just out of this sort of material, one feels, that the two lovers will attempt to build their "temple". Later when Ursula takes Skrebensky to the shed in order to show him her wood carving their love making takes on the character of a conscious game rather than an expression of spontaneous feelings. We have here the assertion of the "will" which, as we know by now, Lawrence regards as the greatest obstacle to the achievement of individuality. The passage runs as follows:

> In the shed they played at kisses, really played at kisses. It was a delicious, exciting game. She turned to him, her face all laughing, like a challenge. And he accepted the challenge at once. He twined his hand full of her hair, and gently, with his hand wrapped round with hair behind her head, gradually brought her face nearer to his, whilst she laughed breathless with challenge, and his eyes gleamed with answer, with enjoyment of the game. And he kissed her, asserting his will over her, and she kissed him back, asserting her deliberate enjoyment

> of him. Daring and reckless and dangerous they knew it was, their game, each playing with fire, not with love.[45]

What is wrong with their behavior is indicated by Lawrence in a passage that follows soon after in which he stops to analyze the effects of the love-making in the shed. (The secrecy of the shed itself lends a kind of profanity to the whole episode and recalls the earlier episode between Anna and Will in the hayloft.) Of Ursula's and Skrebensky's experience, Lawrence writes:

> It intensified and heightened their senses, they were more vivid, and powerful in their being. But under it all was a poignant sense of transience. It was a magnificent self-assertion on the part of both of them, he asserted himself before her, he felt himself infinitely male and infinitely irresistible, she asserted herself before him, she knew herself infinitely desirable, and hence infinitely strong. And after all, what could either of them get from such a passion but a sense of his or her own maximum self, in contradistinction to the rest of life? Wherein was something finite and sad, for the human soul at its maximum wants a sense of the infinite.[46]

That a love so begun is not likely to lead to fulfillment is obvious and Lawrence is very careful to dramatize those facts which lead to the final disintegration of the relationship between Ursula and Skrebensky.

It should be pointed out at this time that Skrebensky

is more than the counterpart in the drama of which Ursula is the centre; Skrebensky is both representative and symbolic of those forces in the outside world which Lawrence considers hostile to the development of individuality. That Skrebensky is a soldier is in itself significant, for he, at least when he first appears on the scene, has no reason for existing since there is no war on. Ursula comes to see this uselessness about him when she walks with him along the canal where they meet the inhabitants of the Annabel. Ursula asks the "unchangeable youth" what he would fight for and he fails to give her a satisfying answer so that she bitterly concludes, "It seems to me...as if you weren't anybody--as if there weren't anybody there, where you are. Are you anybody, really? You seem like nothing to me."[47] In contrast to the feeling which Skrebensky arouses in her, the man from the barge and his wife and children give her "a pleasant warm feeling". The man, especially, forms a contrast to Skrebensky in that he radiates life. Lawrence says, "He made her feel the richness of her own life. Skrebensky, somehow, had created a deadness round her, a sterility, as if he were ashes."[48] Skrebensky realizes his inadequacy for he feels envious of the man "for his

"impudent directness and his worship of the woman in Ursula..."[49] He himself is unable to accept Ursula as a being apart from him, to recognize and respect her otherness.

The wedding of Fred Brangwen brings Ursula and Skrebensky together again and the relationship between them is once more analyzed. The dance in which they join, so vividly described by Lawrence, serves to clarify the nature of their relationship. Far from being a spontaneous thing, their dancing is a locking of their wills into a kind of oneness which, once again, shows that they are repudiating the doctrine of individuality. "It was his will and her will locked in a trance of motion, two wills locked in one motion, yet never fusing, never yielding one to the other."[50] Once again Ursula feels the "burden of him, the blind, persistent, inert burden"[51] and she wishes she were free. But Skrebensky forces her to walk with him to the stackyard where after his kisses she is "overcome with slow horror."[52] Instead of being able to exult in his individuality, Skrebensky is obliterated by Ursula and she goes home conscious that the moonlit night is somehow much more magnificent than anything that she has thus far been able to experience

with Skrebensky.

When the Boer War breaks out in South Africa, Skrebensky places his duty to the nation above everything else. He is willing to surrender his individuality for the "greatest good of the greatest number", but his service brings him little joy or satisfaction. His identification with the army indicates that he does not hold his intrinsic self in great respect. Lawrence describes him:

> He went about his duties, giving himself up to them. At the bottom of his heart his self, the soul that aspired and had true hope of self-effectuation lay as dead, still-born, as dead weight in his womb. Who was he, to hold important his personal connection? What did a man matter personally? He was just a brick in the whole great social fabric, the nation, the modern humanity. His personal movements were small, and entirely subsidiary. The whole form must be ensured, not ruptured, for any personal reason whatsoever, since no personal reason could justify such a breaking. What did personal intimacy matter? One had to fill one's place in the whole, the great scheme of man's elaborate civilisation, that was all. The Whole mattered--but the unit, the person, had no importance, except as he represented the Whole.[53]

This is the root of Skrebensky's inadequacy and we see quite plainly that it violates the doctrine of individuality in that according to the doctrine it is not possible to set up ahead of time a place for man to fill since no man

can know what he will become, what his self will be. Thus Skrebensky, who believes that, apart from gratifying his five senses, he must serve "the extant Idea of life",[54] will never be able to achieve the flower of his self. When he parts with Ursula he promises to come back "But as one keeps an appointment, not as a man returning to his fulfillment".[55]

The next phase of Ursula's life, which is related in the chapter entitled "Shame", is in a sense a result of her betrayal of her intrinsic self in her relationship with Skrebensky. Her experience with Skrebensky and the succeeding days of anguish cause "her sexual life" to flame "into a kind of disease within her".[56] Her experience with Winifred Inger is thus a kind of penalty she pays for trespassing on her own soul. Yet while Winifred serves as the instrument of punishment she does at the same time bring home to Ursula very vividly the value of her own intrinsic self for Winifred Inger herself is the product of another social idea which like Skrebensky's army is a violation of the doctrine of individuality. Winifred is the emancipated woman who believes in the vote and in the Women's Movement. Winifred realizes that "love is an idea"

to a great many men and that this is what lies at the root of much human misery, but she is herself unable to escape from her corruption even though she realizes what is wrong. Like Skrebensky she is doomed to failure. But in spite of the disintegration which stems from her association with Winifred, Ursula never really loses hold of her intrinsic self. Lawrence says,

> Yet, within all the great attack of disintegration upon her, she remained herself. It was the terrible core of all her suffering, that she was always herself. Never could she escape that: she could not put off being herself.[57]

The visit to Wiggiston which the two girls pay to Tom Brangwen serves to bring home to Ursula the threat of the machine to the development of individuality. Her Uncle Tom himself has come to a "stable nullification" in which state he neither cares "about his body nor about his soul".[58] Lawrence's description of Wiggiston as "a mass of homogeneous red-brick dwellings" which suggest "death rather than life" contains his implicit criticism of English industrialism. He writes:

> The place had a strange desolation of a ruin. Colliers hanging about in gangs and groups, or passing along the asphalt pavements to work, seemed not like living people, but like spectres. The rigidity of the blank streets, the homogeneous amorphous sterility of the whole suggested death

> rather than life. There was no meeting place, no centre, no artery, no organic formation. There it lay, like the new foundations of a red-brick confusion rapidly spreading, like a skin-disease.[59]

The material effects of living in this type of environment are to be seen very explicitly in the case of the widow who is a servant in Tom's house. Her husband has been killed by consumption only a short while before and Tom says smiling,

> "She'll be getting married again directly. One man or another--it does not matter very much. They're all colliers."
>
> "What do you mean?" asked Ursula. "They're all colliers?"
>
> "It is with the women as with us," he replied. "Her husband was John Smith, loader. We reckoned him as a loader, and so she knew he represented his job. Marriage and home is a little side-show. The women know it right enough, and take it for what it's worth. One man or another, it doesn't matter all the world. The pit matters. Round the pit there will always be side-shows, plenty of 'em."[60]

There is in this scene the most utter denial of the doctrine of individuality and the intrinsic worth of the individual human being. The effect on Ursula Brangwen is very significant for it brings home to her the fact that no matter how strong the power of the machine is she must view it only as something which is subservient to man and not as something which is man's master. Lawrence

says,

> No more would she subscribe to the great colliery, to the great machine which has taken us captives. In her soul, she was against it, she disowned even its power. It had only to be forsaken to be inane, meaningless. And she knew it was meaningless. But it needed a great, passionate effort of will on her part, seeing the colliery, still to maintain her knowledge that it was meaningless.[61]

Ursula severs her connections with both her uncle and Winifred who at heart worship the very machine which she herself so much despises. Winifred marries Ursula's uncle, Tom, for Winifred "was an educated woman, and of the same sort as himself. She would make a good companion. She was his mate."[62] And Tom, we are told, "had something marshy about him--the succulent moistness and turgidity, and the same brakish, nauseating effect of a marsh, where life and decaying are one."[63]

With the repudiation of the great industrial machine Ursula's struggles are not ended. There remains "The Man's World" which she must conquer and which she faces in the person of school mistress at the St. Philip's School. Her struggle as a teacher is yet another test of the doctrine of individuality and the fact that she emerges victorious reveals the optimism and confidence which Lawrence communicates in his novel. But she does not win

an easy victory because she gives too much of herself in the beginning. Her dream of being a teacher who is personal in his relationships with students is rudely shattered by the educational system which has no respect for the individuality of its students. The dream which she takes with her to the school is described thus:

> She dreamed how she would make the little, ugly children love her. She would be so personal. Teachers were always so hard and impersonal. There was no vivid relationship. She would make everything vivid and personal, she would give herself, she would give, give, give all her great stores of wealth to her children, she would make them so happy, and they would prefer her to any teacher on the face of the earth.[64]

What a disappointment is hers when she finds out that the school is not much different from the colliery; that like the colliery the school has no room for the individual, only for the "application of a system of laws".[65] She soon discovers that she was foolish in her anticipations. "She had brought her feelings and her generosity," says Lawrence, "to where neither generosity nor emotion were wanted."[66]

The teachers whom Ursula gets to know at the school offer little opportunity for any kind of optimism. As Ursula listens to Mr. Brunt's jarring and monotonous voice

she realizes that the "man was become a mechanism working on and on and on."[67] Poignantly Ursula asks whether she too must become like that. It is only through a great effort of will again that she is able to preserve her self against the destructive forces working against her in the school. She preserves her love of the beautiful things so that when she sees the sunset one evening she cries aloud with joy. Nevertheless, her problems mount up. Lawrence says:

> Though she did not give in, she never succeeded. Her class was getting in worse condition, she knew herself less and less secure in teaching it. Ought she withdraw and go home again? Ought she say she had come to the wrong place, and so retire? Her very life was a test.[68]

Mr. Harby, the headmaster, is against her. He is a bully who is, as Ursula sees him, "imprisoned in a task too small and petty for him, which yet, in a servile acquiescence, he would fulfill, because he had to earn his living."[69] However, if Ursula leaves, she will be admitting that the man's world is too strong for her; she takes the only other alternative. She will master the situation. She separates that part of herself which is most important to her and in school she becomes impersonal. What she personally wants must be put away for the day so

that she "must have nothing more of herself in school".[70] The result of this decision is that

> pale, shut, at last distant and impersonal she saw no longer the child, how his eyes danced, or how he had a queer little soul that could not be bothered with shaping handwriting so long as he dashed down what he thought. She saw no children, only the task to be done. And keeping her eyes there, on the task, and not on the child, she was impersonal enough to punish where she could otherwise only have sympathised, understood, and condoned, to approve where she would have been merely uninterested before. But her interest had no place any more.[71]

In all this Ursula is being true to the doctrine of individuality which states that the deep and personal self must never be yielded up to any kind of outside compulsion. "Never more, and never more would she give herself as individual to her class."[72] But though she succeeds in mastering her job, Ursula is unable to feel like her colleague Maggie Schofield that in "trusting the vote" lies her fulfillment. Lawrence says:

> In coming out and earning her own living she had made a strong, cruel move towards freeing herself. But having more freedom, she only became more profoundly aware of the big want. She wanted so many things. She wanted to read great, beautiful books, and be rich with them; she wanted to see beautiful things, and have the joy of them for ever; she wanted to know big, free people; and there remained always the want she could put no name to.[73]

During the two years of teaching Ursula's self draws

together so that she becomes "more coherent". Although the work of teaching is a great strain upon her she does not go under and in the end she is able to look forward to the time when she will no longer have to be "a prisoner in the dry, tyrannical man-world".[74] On the last day of school she watches the children file out, gives the monitors their sixpences and stands at last in the bare and vacated classroom. Her experience at the school was not a total loss. Lawrence says:

> She had triumphed over it. It was a shell now. She had fought a good fight here, and it had not been altogether unenjoyable. She owed some gratitude even to this hard, vacant place, that stood like a memorial or a trophy. So much of her life had been fought for and won and lost here.[75]

Ursula's completion of her duties at St. Philip's School coincides with the move of her family from Cossethay to their new home in Beldover. Thus she escapes from the meanness and pettiness of her home town as well as from the tyranny of the school. She is ready, therefore, to begin on a new venture in the direction of achieving her individual fulfillment. It is in this spirit of beginning a new life that she enters college. The Gothic architecture which thus far in The Rainbow has always been associated with failure

attracts Ursula even though she realizes that it looks "silly just opposite the bicycle stand and the radiator".[76] Lawrence writes:

> Nevertheless, amorphous as it might be, there was in it a reminiscence of the wondrous, cloistral origin of education. Her soul flew straight back to medieval times, when monks of God held the learning of men and imparted it within the shadow of religion. In this spirit she entered college.[77]

However, after the first year Ursula loses the reverence she held for the college for she discovers that the professors, far from dispensing knowledge in the spirit of pure learning, are merely serving the factory. The passage in which Lawrence comments on Ursula's feelings records also Lawrence's own reaction to the kind of education which he himself underwent at college and for which he held such contempt in later life. He writes:

> The professors were not priests initiated into the deep mysteries of life and knowledge. After all they were only middle-men handling wares that they had become so accustomed to that they were oblivious of them....
>
> The life went out of her studies, why, she did not know. But the whole thing seemed sham, spurious; spurious Gothic arches, spurious peace, spurious Latinity, spurious dignity of France, spurious naivete of Chaucer. It was a second-hand dealer's shop, and one bought an equipment for an examination. This was only a side-show to the factories of the town. Gradually the perception stole into her. This was no religious retreat, no seclusion of pure learning. It was a little apprenticeshop where one was further equipped for making money. The

> college itself was a little, slovenly laboratory for the factory.
>
> A harsh and ugly disillusion came over her again, the same darkness and bitter gloom from which she was never safe now, the realisation of the permanent substratum of ugliness under everything. As she came to college in the afternoon, the lawns were frothed with daisies, the lime trees hung tender and sunlit and green; and oh, the deep, white froth of the daisies was anguish to see.
>
> For inside, the college, she knew she must enter the sham workshop. All the while, it was a sham store, a sham warehouse, with a single motive of material gain, and no productivity. It pretended to exist by the religious virtue of knowledge. But the religious virtue of knowledge was become a flunkey to the god of material success.[78]

Bitter, indeed, is this realization for Ursula and yet she understands that this experience, too, like all the previous experiences in her life, is somehow a necessary thing in her life history so that she says to herself, "No matter! Every hill-top was a little different, every valley was somehow new."[79] She perceives finally that there is a true reality outside the activities which are going on around her. This reality which she identifies with darkness is denied by those who have lived all their lives in the "sinking fires of illuminating consciousness".[80]

During her last year of college when she is twenty-two she hears again from Skrebensky and she turns to him

again to bring her to fulfillment. Then in one of her botany labs she suddenly comes to an understanding of what it is that lies behind all life; she discovers, in fact, the doctrine of individuality. The episode in which Ursula makes her discovery marks an important step in her development for it is after this that she knows what she is after. Lawrence describes Ursula's discovery as follows:

> She looked still at the unicellular shadow that lay within the field of light, under her microscope. It was alive. She saw it move--she saw the bright mist of its ciliary activity, she saw the gleam of its nucleus, as it slid across the plane of light. What then was its will? If it was a conjunction of forces, physical and chemical, what held these forces unified, and for what purpose were they unified?
>
> For what purpose were the incalculable physical and chemical activities nodalised in this shadowy, moving speck under her microscope? What was the will which nodalised them and created the one thing she saw? What was its intention? To be itself? Was its purpose just mechanical and limited to itself?
>
> It intended to be itself. But what self? Suddenly in her mind the world gleamed strangely, with an intense light, like the nucleus of the creature under the microscope. Suddenly she had passed into an intensely-gleaming light of knowledge. She could not understand what it all was. She only knew that it was not limited mechanical energy, nor mere purpose of self-preservation and self-assertion. It was a consummation, a being infinite. <u>Self was a oneness with the infinite</u>. <u>To be oneself was a supreme, gleaming triumph of infinity</u>. (Italics mine)[81]

Ursula's realization of the meaning of the self indicates

that she has grasped the essence of all creation so far as Lawrence's doctrine of individuality is concerned, for to achieve one's individuality is really to come into oneness with the infinite, to achieve the supreme consummation in life. But the coming to one's individuality so far as the human being is concerned has for its condition the polarized connection with the opposite sex so that Ursula, even though she realizes what she must strive for, will be unable to come to her fulfillment until she meets the man with whom she can come into touch with the infinite. Can Skrebensky be that man? The remainder of Lawrence's novel puts Skrebensky to the test.

"The Bitterness of Ecstasy" reveals Ursula's desperate attempt to find her consummation with Skrebensky but she does not succeed. Skrebensky, far from being the man who should bring her to her fulfillment, seems "always side-tracking his own soul". Lawrence tells us:

> He was a great rider, so there was about him some of a horseman's sureness and habitual definiteness of decision, also some of the horseman's animal darkness. Yet his soul was only the more wavering, vague. He seemed to be made up of a set of habitual actions and decisions. The vulnerable, variable quick of the man was inaccessible. She knew nothing of it. She could only feel the dark, heavy fixity of his animal desire.[82]

Not that Skrebensky fails to produce a profound effect on Ursula. Far from it. He makes her feel as if she were "no mere Ursula Brangwen". Lawrence states, "She was Woman, she was the whole of Woman in the human order. All containing, universal, how should she be limited to individuality."[83] It is in thus feeling about herself that Ursula violates the doctrine of individuality for the doctrine holds most tenaciously to the idea that each person is "limited to individuality".

In their love-making Skrebensky denies the doctrine of individuality by failing to recognize the otherness of Ursula. Lawrence explains this as follows:

> He saw her warm, dark, lit-up face watching him from the pillow--yet he did not see it--it was always present, and was to him as his own eyes. He was never aware of the separate being of her. She was like his own eyes and his own heart beating to him.[84]

Skrebensky only experiences physical relief and finally "The horror of not-being possessed him".[85] Later when Ursula tries to pin him down as to what it is that he must go to serve in India, the feeling of death in him becomes even more pronounced. We read, "Now, even whilst he was with her, this death of himself came over him, when he walked about like a body from which all individual life is gone."[86]

Ursula rejects Skrebensky's offer of marriage for she realizes that as a man he has no creative activity to move in and the doctrine of individuality holds that a man must serve in some larger creative life as against a machine. However, there are so many social pressures working against Ursula that she begins to doubt whether she has a right to wish for anything more than society has assigned to her lot. "For what had a woman but to submit? What was her flesh but for childbearing, her strength for her children and her husband, the giver of life?"[87] Ursula reaches this low ebb in her determination when she discovers that she has conceived Skrebensky's child and we feel that Lawrence is saying that almost, almost, the conventions of society are too strong to break. Yet after her illness, though she discovers that there will be no child, Ursula makes up her mind not to give in. Lawrence says:

> There would be no child: she was glad. If there had been a child, it would have made little difference, however. She would have kept the child and herself, she would not have gone to Skrebensky. Anton belonged to the past.[88]

Ursula had tried to create a man out of Skrebensky according to her desires and in this she had been wrong. Lawrence

says,

> It was not for her to create, but to recognise a man created by God. The man should come from the Infinite and she should hail him. She was glad she could not create her man. She was glad she had nothing to do with his creation. She was glad that this lay with the scope of that vaster power in which she rested at last. The man would come out of Eternity to which she herself belonged.[89]

When at the end of the novel she sees the rainbow in the sky she understands that the future is not without hope.

If we look back at The Rainbow we see at once that what the novelist has done is to test the possibility of an individual to come to his own fulfillment in the changing conditions of English society. We have seen in the case of Ursula Brangwen, particularly, those forces which are inimical to the development of individuality and we have watched how much courage it needs to preserve one's self in the face of these forces. Yet while we have seen Ursula fight her battles and emerge a sadder and a wiser woman, we have not been shown what it means to be fulfilled except in the case of Lydia and Tom Brangwen who belong as we have seen to the past. What, we now ask, is the meaning of fulfillment in the time in which Ursula has come to adulthood? What is the nature of the fulfillment for which she has kept herself inviolate? What does it

mean "to come to the flower of oneself"?

The answers to these questions are only implicit in The Rainbow. But this does not mean that Lawrence does not have the answers. What it means is that within the scope of The Rainbow it was not possible for him to present the solution to Ursula's struggle. The reason for this lies in the character of contemporary English society which had already undergone a cataclysmic change by the time that Lawrence finished The Rainbow. That England which is described in The Rainbow is no more; a new England has emerged at the turn of the Twentieth Century and it is in the new England that Ursula perforce would have to come to her fulfillment. It is the examination of this England that we have in his succeeding novel, Women in Love, and in it we are shown what it means to live according to the doctrine of individuality in a modern society.

Women in Love, in this sense at least, does take up the problem which is unresolved at the end of The Rainbow and may thus be regarded as "a kind of sequel" to The Rainbow. The questions which Women in Love raises in connection with the doctrine of individuality and which it attempts to answer will form the substance of the

succeeding page of this study.

III: Women in Love

In a great many ways Women in Love is a much more comprehensive novel than The Rainbow even though the latter spans three generations while the former is confined to only one. What makes Women in Love more comprehensive is its broad sweep of English Society which Lawrence accomplishes with seeming ease. Thus we have not only the working class of the Midlands and the middle class, but we also have the Bohemian society of London, the advanced intellectualism of the times, and the modern industrialist's attitude; in short, we have as F.R. Leavis puts it, "touched the whole pulse of social England".[1] Women in Love is such a complex work of art that it would be impossible to attempt a discussion of it along the same lines as we have looked at The Rainbow. We must therefore limit ourselves to the two pairs of leading characters, Gudrun and Gerald, and Ursula and Birkin. In examining their relationships we shall see the operation of the doctrine of individuality and thus become even more clearly aware of its essential

meaning. It is not here suggested that Women in Love possesses no other worthwhile feature than the elucidation of the doctrine of individuality.

It must be pointed out at this time that the character of Ursula in the succeeding novel is not taken up at the point to which Lawrence has developed it in The Rainbow. Ursula, at the beginning of Women in Love, is no more fulfilled than her younger sister, Gudrun. Like Gudrun, Ursula yearns for something she knows not what, and this something is, we know from the preceding novel, fulfillment. It is this feature in Ursula's character that prevents us from saying that The Rainbow is a completed piece of work. Perhaps Lawrence himself realized that he had not shown Ursula as a fulfilled woman and for this reason he set about writing Women in Love and spoke of the book as "a kind of sequel".

In order to appreciate Ursula's struggle for fulfillment it will be necessary for us to trace her relationship with Birkin and to contrast this couple with Gudrun and Gerald. The presentation of this contrast seems to be Lawrence's main purpose in the novel. It is as if he were saying, "Here are two couples, both young,

"physically healthy, and intelligent, growing up in the same sort of social and economic surroundings. What is it that enables one couple to find fulfillment and what is it that destroys the other?" Fundamentally, Women in Love is a serious attempt to answer this question by imaginatively testing a truth which the novelist thinks he has discovered to be inherent in the conditions of human life. This truth, as we hope to be able to show, is once again the doctrine of individuality; Ursula and Birkin accept the doctrine, but Gudrun and Gerald reject it, and their fortunes rise or fall accordingly.

We learn at the beginning of the book that Ursula's "active being was suspended, but underneath, in the darkness, something was coming to pass."[2] Nevertheless, her existence is not all passive for she is "always thinking, trying to lay hold on life, to grasp it in her own understanding."[3] Ursula, as in The Rainbow, does not approve of the town of Beldover although she has become used to the industrial ugliness through living there. The outstanding quality in Ursula's character is, therefore, her fidelity to her innermost feelings, her reverence for her self. It is just this quality

that we learn a little later is lacking in Hermione Roddice. Hermione has tried all her life to make herself secure, but she has failed. In spite of her outward appearance of self-sufficiency,

> She always felt vulnerable, vulnerable, there was always a secret chink in her armour. She did not know herself what it was. It was a lack of robust self, she had no natural sufficiency, there was a terrible void, a lack, a deficiency of being within her.[4]

It is this lack in Hermione that accounts for her attitude toward Birkin throughout the rest of the book and explains why she tries so desperately to assert her intellectual faculties. On the other hand, it is Ursula's possession of sufficiency of being that makes it possible for her to come to see Birkin's point of view.

Birkin, himself, we learn very early in the novel, stands out as an example of individuality. At the church we are told,

> His nature was clever and separate, he did not fit at all in the conventional occasion. Yet he subordinated himself to the common idea, travestied himself.
>
> He affected to be quite ordinary, perfectly and marvellously commonplace. And he did it so well, taking the tone of his surroundings, adjusting himself quickly to his interlocutor and his

> circumstance, that he achieved a verisimilitude of ordinary commonplaceness that usually propitiated his onlookers for the moment, disarmed them from attacking his singleness.[5]

What needs to be emphasized in regard to Birkin's makeup is his "separate" nature and his "singleness". These qualities account later for Birkin's fulfillment.

What about Gerald Crich? We first see him through the eyes of Gudrun who is later intimately involved with him. He appears as if he does not belong to the world about him and this at first might be taken as the quality of "singleness". However, Lawrence's description of Gerald is associated with ice, which only has strength under very special conditions. And it is not long before we learn from Mrs. Crich that Gerald is far from being self-sufficient. At the reception at Shortlands, Mrs. Crich tells Birkin that Gerald is "the most wanting" of all her children. Thus Gerald's appearance of sufficiency is only an outward one, but he is far from being a weakling as the novel demonstrates later.

At Shortlands, Gerald and Birkin get into a discussion of standards and Birkin comes out with the idea that "anybody who is anything can just be himself and do as he likes."[6] Immediately, as is always the case with

Lawrence, the weakness of the assertion is dramatically challenged. Lawrence knows that this statement will provoke the reader and so he has Gerald press Birkin for a clarification of his statement. Birkin points out to Gerald that he is serious when he says that he thinks that people should do as they like. He goes on,

> I think they always do. But I should like them to like the purely individual thing in themselves, which makes them act in singleness. And they only like to do the collective thing.[7]

On this Gerald and Birkin cannot agree. Gerald says grimly that he "shouldn't like to be in a world of people who acted individually and spontaneously".[8] In this statement we have Gerald's denial of the doctrine of individuality which, as we shall see at some length later, accounts for his destruction. Birkin expresses Lawrence's view when he says, "It's a nasty view of things, Gerald, and no wonder you are afraid of yourself and your own unhappiness."[9] If the doctrine of individuality requires anything, it requires the ability to accept oneself without reservations and this Gerald is obviously unable to do.

The scene which follows that which is enacted at Shortlands takes place in Ursula's classroom where she

is teaching elementary botany. When Birkin comes in she is somewhat upset by his presence in a way which she does not quite understand. The lesson on catkins is full of meaning in that it shows symbolically what Birkin's fundamental outlook is like. The red female flowers and the yellow male flowers to which he draws Ursula's attention and which he would have the children color in boldly in their notebooks are really Lawrence's way of impressing upon the reader his view that male and female must always be kept apart, that there must be no mingling, and that sex is an underlying factor in the achievement of individuality. It is quite common in Lawrence to find flowers as symbols of achieved individuality as we see them here.

The entrance of Hermione into the classroom and the verbal battle between her and Birkin on the question of spontaneity serves to bring out more clearly the essential gap between them. Birkin points out that man must know, must have knowledge, but that it is wrong for us to make everything subservient to the will. Mercilessly, Birkin rebukes Hermione for wanting to <u>know</u> everything. He calls her the "most deliberate thing that walked or crawled". What you want, he tells her, is

"pornography--looking at yourself in mirrors, watching your naked animal actions in mirrors, so that you can have it all in your consciousness, make it all mental."[10] What would Birkin put in the place of such an attitude? His answer is that,

> ...there's the whole difference in the world...between the actual sensual being, and the vicious mental profligacy that our lot goes in for. In our night-time, there's always the electricity switched on, we watch ourselves, we get it all in the head, really.[11]

But what is one to do? Can one possibly be not committed to mental consciousness? Lawrence says, "You've got to lapse out before you can know what sensual reality is, lapse out into unknowingness, and give up your volition. You've got to do it. You've got to learn not to be, before you can come into being."[12]

The discussion in the classroom, then, is still concerned with the achievement of being or fulfillment, and according to the doctrine of individuality such fulfillment requires a certain suspension of mental consciousness. "It is a fulfillment--the great dark knowledge you can't have in your head--the dark involuntary being. It is death to one's self--but it is the coming into being of another."[13] Of course, Ursula has not grasped

this idea when she hears it in the classroom; it will come out again between her and Birkin and on it will depend their relationship. Only when Ursula sees what Birkin's meaning really is will she be able to bridge the gulf which lies between them. However, here she has been given food for thought and can now turn to solving her problems "in the light of his words".

When Ursula and Gudrun see Gerald Crich swimming in Willey Water, Ursula does not agree with Gudrun that it would be better to be a man like Gerald. Ursula points out that Gerald's "go" doesn't do him very much good since "it all goes in applying the latest appliances".[14] This is not just a facetious remark on her part; it raises the question of the purpose of one's whole existence. Later, Gudrun explains that the "chic thing is to be so absolutely ordinary, so perfectly commonplace and like the person in the street, that you really are a masterpiece of humanity, not the person in the street, but the artistic creation."[15] The girls are, of course, commenting on Hermione's taste in clothing, but the comment is also significant in the broader sense of the ultimate purpose of one's existence. That neither of the two sisters knows

what she is waiting for is described by Lawrence as follows:

> The sisters went home again, to read and talk and work, and wait for Monday, for school. Ursula often wondered what else she waited for, besides the beginning and end of the school week, and the beginning and end of the holidays. This was a whole life! Sometimes she had periods of tight horror, when it seemed to her that her life would pass away, and be gone, without having been more than this. But she never really accepted it. Her spirit was active, her life like a shoot that is growing steadily, but which has not yet come above the ground.[16]

It is as if Lawrence were saying that Ursula is destined to come to her fulfillment because she has not yielded to the commonplaceness around her. She has preserved intact her individuality up to this point and she will eventually know a greater and more satisfying kind of life.

For the moment the focus shifts from the sisters to the two important men in the novel, Gerald and Birkin. The two travel to London together and in the train they discuss whether or not the world is in need of a new gospel. In answer to this question which is put by Gerald, Birkin says, "I think the people who say they want a new religion are the last to accept anything new."[17] Birkin then proceeds to point out that in order to make

a new start mankind would have to destroy its old idols and this it does not have the courage to do. Almost pessimistically, Birkin adds, "People only do what they want to do--and what they are capable of doing. If they were capable of anything else, there would be something else."[18] Birkin now asks the very telling question: "What do you live for?" to which Gerald is unable to offer an any more satisfactory answer than, "I suppose I live to work, to produce something, in so far as I am a purposive being. Apart from that, I live because I am living."[19] Birkin, of course, presses the issue still further. What, he asks, after you have produced enough of the material things of life, what then? The two men play at words for a while until, once again, Birkin asks, "What do you think is the aim and object of your life, Gerald?"

Since Birkin fails to get an answer from Gerald, he suggests an answer. "Do you think love is the be-all and the end-all of life?"[20] Birkin himself says, "I do--I want to love," but Gerald replies, "I don't believe a woman, and nothing but a woman will ever make my life." This disagreement is very significant when considered in the

light of the doctrine of individuality. How can Gerald ever hope for fulfillment when he denies that woman is essential, that the love between a man and a woman is the centre and the core of human existence? If Gerald's life is, as he puts it, "held <u>together</u> by the social mechanism" there seems very little hope left for fulfillment.

Gerald's reaction to Birkin's statement that the love between a man and a woman forms the centre of human existence brings on in Birkin another wave of hopelessness, but as he looks out the train window at the land and at the evening he is quite prepared to sacrifice mankind as the "expression of the incomprehensible". "Humanity," he thinks, "doesn't embody the utterance of the incomprehensible any more. Humanity is a dead letter. There will be a new embodiment, in a new way. Let humanity disappear as quick as possible."[21]

Birkin's dismal view of humanity is quite understandable in the light of the visit to London where we witness the rejection and negation of life in the men and women who make up the world known as the London Bohemia. There is no need at this time to go into the details of Lawrence's description of Halliday, Minette, Libidnikov, and the others. The picture is a rare achievement in itself, and

it serves most effectively to show how Lawrence feels about Bohemia. It is significant that Birkin is nearly silent throughout the whole episode and that Gerald and Minette make up the centre of the action. In the relationship between Minette and Halliday, we have revealed the morbid degradation which prevails between modern man and woman. In her acceptance of Gerald as a lover, Minette exemplifies the emancipated Bohemian attitude towards sex as being an "experience". The fact that Gerald accepts her indicates that he, too, looks upon sex as a mental thrill. There is no real passion between them except a kind of mental sensuality such as Birkin accused Hermione of earlier in the novel. Minette has the "inchoate look of a violated slave, whose fulfillment lies in her further and further violation."[22]

From London Bohemia, the action of Women in Love moves to Hermione's residence, Breadalby. Just as Minette and her circle represent the life of the decadent Bohemians who inhabit the artistic world, so Hermione and her circle represent the aristocratic class. The gathering at Breadalby forms an interesting contrast to that in London. Besides the two Brangwen sisters, Birkin,

an Italian Contessa, Fraulein Marz, and Gerald, we have Hermione, her brother Alexander, and Sir Joshua Mattheson. What does this group represent? Are these people any nearer to fulfillment than the London Bohemians? Lawrence comments:

> The talk was very often political or sociological, and interesting, curiously anarchistic. There was an accumulation of powerful force in the room, powerful and destructive. Everything seemed to be thrown into the melting pot, and it seemed to Ursula they were all witches, helping the pot to bubble. There was an elation and a satisfaction in it all, but it was cruelly exhausting for the newcomers, this ruthless mental pressure, this powerful consuming, destructive mentality that emanated from Joshua and Hermione and Birkin and dominated the rest.[23]

Here at Breadalby the struggle between Birkin and Hermione continues, the latter trying desperately to bring the former into her power and failing rather miserably. Here, too, Gerald first becomes attracted to Gudrun as she dances with Ursula and the Contessa. It is here, too, that Birkin sees "the brilliant frustration and helplessness of Ursula" and is unconsciously drawn to her in such a way that he realizes that she is his future.

In the morning, Birkin reflects on the meaning of Breadalby which he sees as belonging to the past. Lawrence

writes,

> ...He was thinking how lovely, how sure, how formed, how final all things of the past were--the lovely accomplished past--this house, so still and golden, the park slumbering in centuries of peace. And then what a snare and a delusion, this beauty of static things--what a horrible, dead prison Breadalby really was, what an intolerable confinement, the peace! Yet it was better than the sordid scrambling conflict of the present. If only one might create the future after one's own heart--for a little pure truth, a little unflinching application of simple truth to life, the heart cried out ceaselessly.[24]

But when Birkin comes down to breakfast he sees that the men and women there are still playing the same "game with the figures set out, the same figures, the Queen of chess, the knights, the pawns, the same now as they were hundreds of years ago, the same figures moving round one of the innumerable permutations that make up the game."[25] Alexander Roddice adds a kind of ironic confirmation to Birkin's thoughts when he announces that he must go to church to read the lessons.

> "Are you a Christian?" asked the Italian Countess, with sudden interest.
> "No," said Alexander. "I'm not. But I believe in keeping up the old institutions."[26]

The bathing episode is vaguely reminiscent of the one which was previously enacted in the London flat except that this time it takes place outdoors in much more lavish surroundings. The Brangwen sisters refuse to bathe because

they do not "like the crowd" and who can really blame them? "Don't they look saurian? They're just like great lizards," says Gudrun to Ursula. Later Gerald approaches Gudrun and it is then that he commits himself to her. We discover that whether he would or not,

> ...she signified the real world to him. He wanted to come up to her standards, fulfil her expectations. He knew that her criterion was the only one that mattered. The others were all outsiders, instinctively, whatever they might be socially. And Gerald could not help it, he was bound to strive to come up to her criterion, fulfil her idea of a man and a human-being.[27]

In adopting this attitude, Gerald is sacrificing his chance for fulfillment. We know that the doctrine of individuality maintains that it is impossible to fix the idea of the living self and that to pattern one's life after someone else's idea of what one should be is to deny the creative life in oneself.

After lunch, the group discusses the idea of social equality which Sir Joshua believes is the "great Social idea". Birkin and Gerald agree that there is no such thing and when the others leave, Birkin takes Hermione to task on her view that "in the <u>spirit</u> we are all one, all equal in the spirit, all brothers there."[28] It is in answer to Hermione's declaration that Birkin expounds the

principle of otherness which is one of the mainstays of the doctrine of individuality. Birkin says:

> One man isn't any better than another, not because they are equal, but because they are intrinsically other, that there is no term of comparison. The minute you begin to compare, one man is seen to be far better than another, all the inequality you can imagine is there by nature. I want every man to have his share in the world's goods, so that I can tell him: "Now you've got what you want--you've got your fair share of the world's gear. Now, you one-mouthed fool, mind yourself and don't obstruct me."[29]

Birkin's stay at Breadalby comes to a dramatic end when he pays Hermione a visit in her boudoir. She is suddenly possessed by an insane desire to kill him and almost succeeds as she tries to bash his head in with a heavy paperweight. Birkin escapes, however, and wanders out into the park. There among the flowers, the shrubs, and the young fir-trees he removes all his clothes and experiences a "perfect cool loneliness, so lovely and fresh and unexplored". This behavior on his part indicates that for the moment he tries to lose his connection with the human world and attempts to find his fulfillment in contact with the subtle, responsive vegetation. His obvious enjoyment of the experience must not lead us to conclude that Lawrence is advocating

the kind of behavior that Birkin indulges in. We know, and Lawrence certainly knew, that this world of vegetation could not be Birkin's "marriage bed". And thus the statement that, "Here was his world, he wanted nobody and nothing but the lovely, subtle, responsive vegetation, and himself, his own living self," cannot be taken to mean anything but that Birkin is trying to deceive himself, and we must not for a moment believe that, "He could love the vegetation and be quite happy and unquestioned, by himself." That Birkin "would overlook the old grief,...would put away the old ethic...., would be free in his new state" is just so much wishful thinking on his part.

We must leave Birkin for the moment and turn to Gerald Crich. We see him mounted on an Arab mare before a railway crossing. As the train approaches, the mare begins to grow frightened, but Gerald is determined to make her stand there. Ursula and Gudrun watch him as he forces the quivering animal to face the locomotive and Ursula finds herself hating Gerald. Gudrun sees in the scene the powerful male in Gerald; the effect on her is described thus:

> Gudrun was as if numbed in her mind by the sense of indomitable soft weight of the man, bearing down into the living body of the horse: the strong, indomitable thighs of the blond man clenching the palpitating body of the mare into pure control; a sort of soft white magnetic domination from the loins and thighs and calves, enclosing and encompassing the mare heavily into unutterable subordination, soft-blooded subordination, terrible.[30]

What Gerald is really doing is supressing instinctive life as symbolized by the mare, bringing this life under complete control of his will and this fact seems to agree with Gudrun. The important thing to note, however, is that this supression of the instinctual life is a denial of the doctrine of individuality. It should be noted, too, that Ursula, it is said, "alone understood him perfectly, in pure opposition".[31] Ursula is of a different nature than Gerald, but Gudrun is of the same kind. This similarity or identity in Gerald and in Gudrun is made explicit in the scene which takes place a little later when Gudrun is sketching some water plants. When Gudrun tells Gerald that her sketchbook "doesn't matter in the <u>least</u>" she implies that there is something that does matter. Lawrence comments as follows:

> The bond was established between them, in that look, in her tone. In her tone, she made the understanding clear--freemasonry subsisted between

> them. Henceforward, she knew, she had her power over him. Wherever they met, they would be secretly associated. And he would be helpless in the association with her. Her soul exulted.[32]

While this recognition is taking place between Gerald and Gudrun, Ursula who has made her way to the mill-pond meets Birkin. When she sees him, Birkin is trying to make a punt water-tight. The whole scene that follows has several depths of meaning for while it is true that Birkin is literally patching a boat, it is true also that he is trying to make himself whole at the same time. Furthermore, when we last saw him, he was wishing that he could get away by himself to an island where he might be "free and glad". Now he does go to an island, but he is with Ursula so that we know Lawrence is telling us that Birkin's fulfillment can never be reached alone. In addition, Birkin informs Ursula that he has been ill and gives the reason that "one is ill because one doesn't live properly--can't. It's the failure to live that makes one ill, and humiliates one."[33] Because, as he puts it, "one's life isn't really right, at the source" he has felt humiliated and we must think back to the scene in the park as being the real cause of his humiliation.

Almost painfully, Birkin lays bare his problem before Ursula by saying, "it infuriates me that I can't get right, at the really growing part of me. I feel all tangled and messed up, and I can't get straight anyhow. I don't know what really to do. One must do something somewhere." Then he adds, "But I can't get my flower to blossom anyhow. Either it is blighted in the bud, or has got the smother-fly, or it isn't nourished. Curse it, it isn't even a bud. It is a contravened knot."[34] In the discussion that follows Ursula challenges Birkin on several issues. He is still very pessimistic about the state of humanity, feeling that it would be better if all of humanity were swept away, but Ursula sees that "all the while, in spite of himself, he would have to be trying to save the world."[35] She tries to show Birkin that he bothers about humanity because he loves it, but he is unwilling to admit her claim. Thus she poses this question: "And if you don't believe in love, what do you believe in?" Birkin cannot give a satisfactory answer, but he does clarify his position by saying that the word, love, has been vulgarized. Finally, he reveals what it is that he is after. He says, "One must throw everything away, everything--let everything go, to get

"the one last thing one wants." "What thing?" asks Ursula. "I don't know--freedom together", he says. Later Ursula, for a moment, seems to side with Hermione against Birkin, but when she leaves and is all alone she realizes that she is held to him by "some bond, some deep principle". Lawrence says, "It was a fight to the death between them--or to new life: though in what the conflict lay, no one could say."[36]

The conflict, of course, will be centered in the meaning of love. It is obvious already that Birkin and Ursula do not agree as to what love means and they will have to come to terms on this score before any worthwhile relationship can exist between them. Thus when Ursula comes to Birkin's rooms we hear him saying,

> ...if we are going to know each other, we must pledge ourselves forever. If we are going to make a relationship, even of friendship, there must be something final and infallible about it.[37]

Ursula insists that it is love that Birkin means, but Birkin maintains that it is not love. What Birkin is after is really the doctrine of individuality and here in <u>Women in Love</u> Lawrence shows us what the doctrine means. Birkin's problem is to make Ursula see and

understand the doctrine just as Lawrence's problem is to communicate this idea to the reader.

To analyze in detail the conflict which is described by Lawrence here would take a great deal of minute study; Lawrence presents the conflict in dramatic form, making Birkin and Ursula the protagonist and antagonist, respectively. In the scene in Birkin's rooms we see writing at its best for we have a battle of ideas presented in a fine and intricate style almost as if we were witnessing two expert fencers. Lawrence does not make it easy for Birkin to win his victory, for Ursula is a relentless opponent; it is a fight to the death--or to a new life.

If Birkin does not want love, what does he want? He wants a relationship that is beyond love in which "one can follow the impulse, taking that which lies in front, and responsible for nothing, asking for nothing, giving nothing, only each taking according to the primal desire."[38] To Ursula this appears to be mere selfishness. Birkin says, "What I want is a strange conjunction with you--not meeting and mingling...but an equilibrium, a pure balance of two single beings:--as the stars balance each other."[39] The doctrine of individuality demands that

there be no "mingling", that both the man and the woman preserve their separate identities, and love implies the giving up of individuality, sacrificing it in consideration for the other person. Ursula, however, thinks that Birkin means to be the dominant male and that he would like her to be subservient to him, a kind of satellite. She fails to see that he does not want to give up his individuality to her; neither, does he desire that she yield up her individuality to him. What he wants is, as he puts it, to be like "two single equal stars balanced in conjunction."[40] In order to be able to meet thus, Birkin points out that it is necessary for them to pledge themselves; "One must commit oneself to a conjunction with the other--for ever. But it is not selfless--it is maintaining the self in mystic balance and integrity--like a star balanced with another star."[41] Still, Ursula will not have it this way; she does not, she says, trust him when he "drags the stars in". And yet she feels drawn to him and finally she manages to get from him the unwilling reply that he does "love" her. The description of the scene is at once tender and cruel:

> She came over to him and put her hand on his shoulder, looking down at him with strange golden-lighted eyes, very tender, but with a curious

> devilish look lurking underneath.
>
> "Say you love me, say 'my love' to me," she pleaded.
>
> He looked back into her eyes, and saw. His face flickered with sardonic comprehension.
>
> "I love you right enough," he said grimly. "But I want it to be something else."
>
> "But why? But why?" she insisted, bending her wonderful luminous face to him. "Why isn't it enough?"
>
> "Because we can go one better," he said, putting his arms around her.
>
> "No, we can't," she said, in a strong, voluptuous voice of yielding. "We can only love each other. Say 'my love' to me, say it."
>
> She put her arms round his neck. He enfolded her, and kissed her subtly, murmuring in a subtle voice of love, and irony, and submission:
>
> "Yes,--my love, yes,--my love. Let love be enough then. I love you then--I love you. I'm bored by the rest."
>
> "Yes," she murmured, nestling very sweet and close to him.[42]

Thus Ursula falls in love with Birkin, deeply and passionately. Even the drowning accident does not affect her vitally. She sits by herself longing for Birkin to come to call at her house all during the following day waiting for him to knock at the door.

Before Birkin arrives, however, Ursula falls into a terrible mood of depression. She feels that she has come to the end of her life and that her life is now nearly concluded. All that now remains is death. She thinks of her life as a school-teacher and decides that death is preferable to this "mere routine and mechanical

"activity". The raptures she goes into about death are faintly reminiscent of those which possessed Birkin after his encounter with Hermione. It is plain to the reader that Ursula is deceiving herself, that her depression springs from nothing greater than a lack of confidence in her relations with Birkin. After all, she has committed herself to him and now he has not arrived to reassure her of his love for her. When later that night Birkin does arrive, it is too late. Ursula has worn herself out with brooding upon death and she begins to hate Birkin because she sees him "as a clear stroke of uttermost contradiction, a strange gem-like being whose existence defined her non-existence."[43] Even when she hears that Birkin is ill, she is unable to "escape this transfiguration of hatred that had come upon her."[44]

While Birkin is ill in bed, it is not strange to find him turning over in his mind the doctrine of individuality. He thinks about marriage and decides that the old way of love is "a dreadful bondage, a sort of conscription". Lawrence says, "The hot narrow intimacy between man and wife was abhorrent. The way they shut their doors, these married people, and shut

"themselves in to their own exclusive alliance with each other, even in love, disgusted him."[45] Birkin thinks about the importance of sex and concludes that it is sex which turns "a man into a broken half of a couple, the woman into the other broken half." What he wants is "to be single in himself, the woman single in herself". He does not deny that sex is necessary, but he objects to regarding it as a fulfillment. Those writers on Lawrence who have understood Lawrence as himself looking upon sex as fulfillment would do well to read the following passage carefully:

> He wanted sex to revert to the level of the other appetites, to be regarded as a functional process, not as a fulfillment. He believed in sex marriage. But beyond this, he wanted a further conjunction, where man had being and woman had being, two pure beings, each constituting the freedom of the other, balancing each other like two poles of one force, like two angels, or two demons.
>
> He wanted so much to be free, not under the compulsion of any need for unification, or tortured by the unsatisfied desire. Desire and aspiration should find their object without all this torture, as now, in a world of plenty, simple thirst is inconsiderable, satisfied almost unconsciously. And he wanted to be with Ursula as free as with himself, single and clear and cool, yet balanced, polarised with her. The merging, the clutching, the mingling of love was become madly abhorrent to him.[46]

Birkin feels that Ursula does not want this kind of

union with him; she would prefer to be so certain of him that she would "worship him as a woman worships her infant, with a worship of perfect possession."

In attacking this female desire for possession, Lawrence gives one of the most explicit statements of the doctrine of individuality that occurs in the novel. The statement is worth quoting at length because it shows explicitly what Lawrence as a novelist is trying to get across in the novel dramatically and artistically. Furthermore, the statement proves that Women in Love does have for its central theme the elucidation of the doctrine of individuality.

> It was intolerable, this possession at the hands of woman. Always a man must be considered as the broken-off fragment of a woman, and the sex was the still aching scar of laceration. Man must be added on to a woman, before he had any real place or wholeness.
>
> And why? Why should we consider ourselves, men and women, as broken fragments of one whole? It is not true. We are not broken fragments of one whole. Rather we are the singling away into purity and clear being, of things that were mixed. Rather the sex is that which remains in us of the mixed, the unresolved. And passion is the further separating of this mixture, that which is manly being taken into the being of man, that which is womanly passing into woman, till the two are clear and whole as angels, the admixture of sex in the highest sense surpassed, leaving two single beings constellated together like two stars.
>
> In the old age, before sex was, we were mixed, each one a mixture. The process of singling into

> individuality resulted into the great polarization of sex. The womanly drew to one side, the manly to the other. But the separation was imperfect even then. And so our world-cycle passes. There is now to come the new day, when we are beings each of us, fulfilled in difference. The man is pure man, the woman pure woman, they are perfectly polarised. But there is no longer any of the horrible merging, mingling, self-abnegation of love. There is only the pure duality of polarization, each one free from any contamination of the other. In each, the individual is primal, sex is subordinate, but perfectly polarised. Each has a single, separate being, with its own laws. The man has his pure freedom, the woman hers. Each acknowledges the perfection of the polarised sex-circuit. Each admits the different nature in the other.[47]

It is in accord with this view that Birkin is destined to try to find his fulfillment with Ursula.

However, when Gerald visits him, Birkin realizes that a relationship with Ursula by itself will not be enough; he must also achieve a relationship with Gerald. While they are talking about Gerald's sister, Winifred, Birkin sees himself confronted with this other problem. Lawrence says,

> Suddenly he saw himself confronted with another problem--the problem of love and eternal conjunction between two men. Of course this was necessary--it had been a necessity inside himself all his life--to love a man purely and fully. Of course he had been loving Gerald all along, and all along denying it.[48]

Birkin asks Gerald to swear a fellowship with him, but

Gerald excuses himself by saying that he will leave it until he understands it better. Later in the novel, Lawrence deals more fully with this important theme. At this time, Gerald's inadequacy is stated in these words: "Now Birkin wanted him to accept the fact of intrinsic difference between human beings, which he did not intend to accept. It was against his social honour, his principle."[49] The recognition of "intrinsic difference" is really the principle of <u>otherness</u> which is part of the doctrine of individuality.

Gerald is unable to accept the principle of otherness because all his life he has lived by another ideal. The chapter called "Industrial Magnate" describes very clearly what Gerald's attitude towards other people has been in the past. When he decides to reform the workings of the mines, Lawrence says of Gerald,

> Suddenly he had conceived the pure instrumentality of mankind. There had been so much humanitarianism, so much talk of sufferings and feelings. It was ridiculous. The sufferings and feelings of individuals did not matter in the least. They were mere conditions, like the weather. What mattered was the pure instrumentality of the individual. As a man as of a knife: does it cut well? Nothing else mattered.
>
> Everything in the world has its function, and is good or not good so far as it fulfils this function more or less perfectly. Was a miner a good miner? Then he was complete. Was a manager a good

> manager? That was enough. Gerald himself, who was responsible for all this industry, was he a good director? If he were, he had fulfilled his life.[50]

Such a concept of fulfillment is not in accord with the doctrine of individuality and it has its disastrous effect on Gerald. That his life is headed in the wrong direction is shown by the fact that once he has succeeded in making the mines work more or less perfectly he begins to become frightened. Lawrence writes,

> In a strangely indifferent, sterile way, he was frightened. But he could not react even to the fear. It was as if his centres of feeling were drying up. He remained calm, calculative and healthy, and quite freely deliberate, even whilst he felt, with faint, small but final sterile horror, that his mystic reason was breaking, giving way now, at this crisis...And it became more and more difficult, such a strange pressure was upon him, as if the very middle of him were a vacuum, and outside were an awful tension.[51]

In this state, Gerald is unable to find even "relief in women". Lawrence says, "A Pussum was all right in her way, but she was an exceptional case, and even she mattered extremely little."

When Gudrun comes to Shortlands to help Winifred with her drawing, Gerald seems fated to come into contact with her. In the scene where Gudrun grabs hold of the rabbit to take him to the little green court, she enacts

the same kind of suppression of instinctive life that she witnessed earlier in Gerald as he held his Arab mare at the railway crossing. Thus there passes between them a subtle kind of recognition that they are two of a kind.

> Gudrun looked at Gerald with strange darkened eyes, strained with underworld knowledge, almost supplicating, like those of a creature, which is at his mercy, yet which is his ultimate victor. He did not know what to say to her. He felt the mutual hellish recognition. And he felt he ought to say something, to cover it. He had the power of lightning in his nerves, she seemed like a soft recipient of his magical, hideous white fire. He was unconfident, he had qualms of fear.[52]

A little later we read,

> Glancing up at him, into his eyes, she revealed again the mocking, white-cruel recognition. There was a league between them, abhorrent to them both. They were implicated with each other in abhorrent mysteries.[53]

While this strange relationship is developing at Shortlands, Birkin has returned from the south of France where he went for a time after he recovered from his illness. He has not written to Ursula who now feels that there is "no hope in the world". Ursula goes out for a walk and at the mill pond comes upon Birkin unawares. As she watches him, Birkin begins to stone the moon's

reflection in the pond, but no matter how hard he tries, the image of the moon begins to reassert itself and will not disappear off the face of the water. Symbolically, of course, the moon stands for Ursula and by trying to make it disappear, Birkin is trying to rid himself of the hold which she has gotten over him. When Ursula asks him if it is hate that made him throw the stones at the moon, Birkin does not acknowledge that it is. The implication appears to be that Birkin is testing his love for Ursula to see if he could ever be without her and the inviolability of the moon's image indicates that he must seek his fulfillment with her. The two of them sit down at the roots of the trees. In the stillness of the night Birkin says, "There is a golden light in you, which I wish you would give me."[54] Ursula confesses that her life is unfulfilled, but almost immediately the old conflict rises between them, she asserting that he does not really love her and he, desperately trying to make her understand that he is after something more than love in the old sense. Nevertheless, the storm blows over and as in the scene in Birkin's rooms, Ursula makes him declare that he does love her.

After Ursula goes home, Birkin finds himself "face

"to face with a situation." "On the one hand," says Lawrence, "he knew he did not want a further sensual experience--something deeper and darker than ordinary life could give."[55] This type of sensual experience is symbolized in the West African statuettes which Birkin remembers seeing at Halliday's. It is the result of "purely sensual understanding, knowledge in the mystery of dissolution". But it is an "inverted culture" following upon the death of the creative faculties in man. Birkin asks:

> Was this then all that remained? Was there left now nothing but to break off from the happy creative being, was the time up? Is our day of creative life finished? Does there remain to us only the strange, awful afterwards of the knowledge in dissolution, the African knowledge, but different in us, who are blond and blue-eyed from the north?[56]

Birkin does not believe that man must give up his creative life. According to the doctrine of individuality, creative activity in man must go hand in hand with his achievement of individuality. And so Birkin commits himself to the other way, the way of the doctrine of individuality, the way of fulfillment that lies with Ursula:

There was another way, the way of freedom. There

> was the paradisal entry, into pure single being, the individual soul taking precedence over love and desire for union, stronger than any pangs of emotion, a lovely state of free proud singleness, which accepted the obligation of the permanent connection with others, and with the other, submits to the yoke and leash of love, but never forfeits its own proud individual singleness, even while it loves and yields.
>
> There was the other way, the remaining way. And he must run to follow it. He thought of Ursula, how sensitive and delicate she really was, her skin was so over-fine, as if one skin were wanting. She was really so marvellously gentle and sensitive. Why did he ever forget it? He must go to her at once. He must ask her to marry him. They must marry at once, and so make a definite pledge, enter into a definite communion. He must set out at once and ask her, this moment. There was no moment to spare.[57]

Ursula is not at home when Birkin arrives at the Brangwen household. She has gone to the library and Birkin is forced to talk to Will Brangwen as they wait for the girl to return. The father does not help to make Birkin's situation any less awkward, but Birkin has made up his mind and nothing is going to stop him. When Ursula finally comes home, it is Will Brangwen who announces why Mr. Birkin has come. Ursula receives the news of Birkin's proposal in an almost indifferent manner which makes Birkin think that she does not really want him, that she is somehow satisfied in her own world and that once more he has been mistaken. However, having

made his proposal, Birkin decides to leave it up to Ursula; he says, "there's no need to answer at once. You can say when you like."[58] And upon this note he departs.

Ursula's father becomes furious with her, but she merely retreats to her own room. "Ursula's face closed, she completed herself against them all. Recoiling upon herself, she became hard and self-completed, like a jewel."[59] She lives in this state for several days; her only connection is with Gudrun with whom she decides that it would be intolerable to live with Birkin because one would have to do everything his way. Gudrun is more vociferous in her condemnation of Birkin and Ursula only half agrees with her. In the end, Ursula recoils from Gudrun as well for the latter, says Lawrence, "finished life off so throughly, she made things so ugly and so final."[60]

Why is it that Ursula does not want to marry Birkin at this time? The answer, as we have stated before, lies in the kind of relationship which he desires to effect between them. Lawrence sums up her thinking as follows:

> So she withdrew away from Gudrun and from that which she stood for, she turned in spirit towards Birkin again. She had not seen him since the fiasco of his proposal. She did not want to, because she did not want the question of her acceptance thrust upon her. She knew what Birkin meant when he asked her to marry him; vaguely, without putting it into

> speech, she knew. She knew what kind of love, what kind of surrender he wanted. She was not at all sure that it was this mutual unison in separateness that she wanted. She wanted unspeakable intimacies. Whe wanted to have him, utterly, finally to have him as her own, oh, so unspeakably, in intimacy. To drink him down--ah, like a life-draught. She made great professions, to herself, of her willingness to warm his foot-soles between her breasts, after the fashion of the nauseous Meredith poem. But only on condition that he, her lover, loved her absolutely, with complete self-abandon. And subtly enough, she knew he would never abandon himself <u>finally</u> to her. He did not believe in final self-abandonment. He said it openly. It was his challenge. She was prepared to fight him for it. For she believed in an absolute surrender to love. She believed that love far surpassed the individual. He said the individual was <u>more</u> than love, or than any relationship. For him, the bright, single soul accepted love as one of its conditions, a condition of its own equilibrium. She believed that love was <u>everything</u>. Man must render himself up to her. He must be quaffed to the dregs by her. Let him be <u>her man</u> utterly, and she in return would be his humble slave--whether she wanted it or not.[61]

Ursula has not yet grasped the doctrine of individuality and it is this fact that stands between her and Birkin. The conflict between them has now been stated in terms of the doctrine and the rest of the novel will show how Ursula comes to see Birkin's point of view and how, after she has accepted the doctrine, she finds her fulfillment.

However, the novel has also to make clear another aspect of the doctrine of individuality, namely, the idea that man also needs, besides a relationship with a woman,

a final relationship with other men as well. Thus far the friendship between Gerald and Birkin has contained merely the seeds of this relationship. In the chapter entitled "Gladiatorial" Lawrence attempts to give expression to this other aspect of the doctrine of individuality. This attempt in Women in Love is not altogether successful and for this reason Lawrence tests his ideas in several of the succeeding novels such as Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo, and The Plumed Serpent. The chapter we are referring to in Women in Love describes a wrestling scene between Gerald and Birkin at Shortlands. Birkin has come here after the fiasco of his marriage proposal to Ursula. Gerald is alone and when Birkin comes in is very glad to see him for he has been feeling that life holds nothing worthwhile any more.

Of the wrestling, Lawrence says, "The wrestling had some deep meaning to them--an unfinished meaning."[62] It is an "unfinished" meaning because Lawrence himself does not really know what it is that he is describing. He is using the novel as he does so often, to test or to explore an idea. Nevertheless, he does make it clear that Birkin's relationship with Gerald is not a substitute for that with Ursula and he does imply that the connection

with Ursula is the more important of the two. Birkin's words, "I don't know why one should have to justify oneself", and "One should enjoy what is given", are certainly incomplete explanations of the significance of this man-to-man relationship. Lawrence does help to clarify the problem by pointing out that the relationship is of a different kind--"in another direction". His statement is:

> Birkin laughed. He was looking at the handsome figure of the other man, blond and comely in the rich robe, and he was half thinking of the difference between it and himself--so different; as far, perhaps, apart as man from woman, yet in another direction. But really it was Ursula, it was the woman who was gaining ascendance over Birkin's being, at this moment. Gerald was becoming dim again, lapsing out of him.[63]

Birkin tells Gerald about his proposal to Ursula, and the two men discuss the importance of love in one's life. Gerald wonders if he will ever really love a woman, but Birkin can be of no help to him in answering his question.

Still, it is not the end for Gerald. Gudrun accepts the offer to stay on at Shortlands which makes it possible for Gerald to spend more time with her. Thus there develops between them that strange subterranean understanding which has already begun between them.

> And they both felt the subterranean desire to let go, to fling away everything, and lapse into a sheer unrestraint, brutal and licentious. A strange black passion surged up pure in Gudrun. She felt strong. She felt her hands so strong, as if she could tear the world asunder with them. She remembered the abandonments of Roman licence, and her heart grew hot. She knew she wanted this herself also--or something, something equivalent. Ah, if that which was unknown and suppressed in her were once let loose, what an orgiastic and satisfying event it would be. And she wanted it, she trembled slightly from the proximity of the man, who stood just behind her, suggestive of the same black licentiousness that rose in herself. She wanted it with him, this unacknowledged frenzy.[64]

This passage indicates that both Gerald and Gudrun are choosing that way to fulfillment which Birkin rejected when he was contemplating the meaning of the West African statuette. It is the way of progressive disintegration, the way of pure sensual fulfillment, of "mindless, dreadful mysteries, far beyond the phallic cult."[65]

We know that Gerald and Gudrun are bound to meet in this type of awful sensual consummation, but the meeting is not to take place just yet. In the meantime, we witness a scene between Ursula and Hermione. Ursula reveals that Birkin wishes to marry her and Hermione asks why the former is not willing to do so. Ursula's answer is, "He wants me to give myself up--and I simply don't feel that I <u>can</u> do it." Then she adds, "He says

"he wants me to accept him non-emotionally, and finally--I really don't know <u>what</u> he means."[66] The problem, therefore, is not so much a disagreement between Birkin and Ursula that for the time being prevents them from getting together; it is, rather, the failure on Ursula's part to grasp Birkin's essential meaning and his meaning is that of the doctrine of individuality. Actually, as we have pointed out on previous occasions, Birkin wants anything but that Ursula "give" herself up; he does not want "(her) to sink (herself)...not to have any being of (her) own".[67]

The main topic of conversation between the two women is Birkin, and Hermione does her best to discourage Ursula from seriously considering to marry Birkin. The scene brings out the difference between the two women. Hermione, "the leaf upon a dying tree", and Ursula, the earnestly seeking woman who tries to find her fulfillment. However, the arrival of Birkin upon the scene makes Ursula very angry for she feels that Hermione and Birkin are somehow subtly in league with each other. Ursula leaves, feeling that she must get away:

> When she had got outside the house, she ran down the road in fury and agitation. It was strange, the unreasoning rage and violence Hermione roused in her,

> by her very presence. Ursula knew she gave herself away to the other woman, she knew she looked ill-bred, uncouth, exaggerated. But she did not care. She only ran up the road, lest she should go back and jeer in the faces of the two she had left behind. For they outraged her.[68]

Birkin, however, seeks Ursula out the next day. It is a half day at the Grammar School so she consents to go driving with him. He presents her with three rings which she accepts. Lawrence says,

> She knew that, in accepting the rings, she was accepting a pledge. Yet fate seemed more than herself. She looked again at the jewels. They were very beautiful to her eyes--not as ornaments, or wealth, but as tiny fragments of loveliness.[69]

The engagement is, nevertheless, very short-lived. The two begin to quarrel over Birkin's former association with Hermione and Ursula concludes by flinging the rings into the mud. Lawrence's description of the quarrel shows a marvellous power of writing. The quarrel, too, reveals the painful and naked honesty which he put into his work, for Ursula's attacks on Birkin are just those attacks by his critics that were and are still being hurled at Lawrence himself. The reason why Lawrence persisted and why Birkin persists in his line of thinking is found in these words:

> No doubt Ursula was right. It was true, really, what she said. He knew that his spirituality was concomitant of a process of depravity, a sort of pleasure in self-destruction. There really was a certain stimulant in self-destruction, for him--when he was translated spiritually. But then he knew it--he knew it, and had done. And was not Ursula's way of emotional intimacy, emotional and physical, was it not just as dangerous as Hermione's abstract spiritual intimacy? Fusion, fusion, this horrible fusion of two beings, which every woman and most men insisted on, was it not nauseous and horrible anyhow, whether it was a fusion of the spirit or of the emotional body? Hermione saw herself as the perfect Idea, to which all men must come: and Ursula was the perfect Womb, the bath of birth, to which all men must come! And both were horrible.[70]

But what is Lawrence's alternative? Here it is stated in terms of the doctrine of individuality:

> Why could they not remain individuals, limited by their own limits? Why this dreadful all-comprehensiveness, this hateful tyranny? Why not leave the other being free, why try to absorb, or melt, or merge? One might abandon oneself utterly to the moments, but not to any other being.[71]

After the violent quarrel, there follows a beautiful scene of tender reconciliation. Ursula returns to Birkin, who is standing there on the lonely road, and gives him a flower. This gift of the flower is symbolically her pledge to him, for from this time forth, the relationship between them is established. This scene, enacted on an almost deserted country lane, is the turning point in

Ursula's and Birkin's relationship. True, she has not yet seen him as the supremely other being, an experience which will confirm her initiation into the full mystery of the doctrine of individuality, but for the moment she has shed her old self, and we can be certain that she is soon destined to come to her new fulfillment.

It is in Southwell Minster at the inn called the Saracen's Head that Ursula sees Birkin for the first time as the other and thus comes to understand fully one of the leading tenets of the doctrine of individuality.

> She looked at him. He seemed still so separate. New eyes were opened in her soul. She saw a strange creature from another world, in him. It was as if she were enchanted, and everything was metamorphosed. She recalled again the old magic of the Book of Genesis, where the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair. And he was one of these, one of these strange creatures from the beyond, looking down at her, and seeing she was fair.[72]

The scene which now follows describes in concrete form how Ursula physically discovers Birkin to be one of "the sons of God, the strange inhuman sons of God who are in the beginning".[73] Graham Hough, in his recent book on Lawrence, cites this scene as an example of the kind of writing that he wishes Lawrence had not attempted.[74] The justification for Hough's censure is difficult to see

in the light of the doctrine of individuality. Ursula must recognize Birkin's physical otherness in concrete form, not in any kind of spiritual indefiniteness, and to Lawrence the sexual experience is the embodiment of this recognition. As to whether or not it is possible to deal successfully with this subject in a novel, the reader will have to judge for himself after having read Lawrence. To my mind, there is nothing in English Literature that can compare with Lawrence's achievement in this regard. The following passages are only two illustrations of Lawrence's genius:

> After a lapse of stillness, after the rivers of strange dark fluid richness had passed over her, flooding, carrying away her mind and flooding down her spine and down her knees, past her feet, a strange flood, sweeping away everything and leaving her an essential new being, she was left quite free, she was free in complete ease, her complete self. So she rose, stilly and blithe, smiling at him. He stood before her, glimmering, so awfully real, that her heart almost stopped beating. He stood there in his strange, whole body, that had its marvellous fountains, like the bodies of the sons of God who were in the beginning. There were strange fountains of his body, more mysterious and potent than any she had imagined or known, more satisfying, ah, finally, mystically-physically satisfying. She had thought there was no source deeper than the phallic source. And now, behold, from the smitten rock of the man's body, from the strange marvellous flanks and thighs, deeper, further in mystery than the phallic source, came the floods of ineffable darkness and ineffable riches.[75]

Then, again:

> He extinguished the lamps at once, and it was pure night, with shadows of trees like realities of other, nightly being. He threw a rug on to the bracken, and they sat in stillness and mindless silence. There were faint sounds from the wood, but no disturbance, no possible disturbance, the world was under a strange ban, a new mystery had supervened. They threw off their clothes, and he gathered her to him, and found her, found the pure lambent reality of her forever invisible flesh. Quenched, inhuman, his fingers upon her unrevealed nudity were the fingers of silence upon silence, the body of mysterious night upon the body of mysterious night, the night masculine and feminine, never to be seen with the eye, or known with the mind, only known as a palpable revelation of living otherness.
>
> She had her desire of him, she touched, she received the maximum of unspeakable communication in touch, dark, subtle, positively silent, a magnificent gift and give again, a perfect acceptance and yielding, a mystery, the reality of that which can never be known, vital, sensual reality that can never be transmuted into mind content, but remains outside, living body of darkness and silence and sublety, the mystic body of reality. She had her desire fulfilled. He had his desire fulfilled. For she was to him what he was to her, the immemorial magnificence of mystic, palpable, real otherness.[76]

Thus Ursula and Birkin find their fulfillment at last, having travelled along a difficult journey and having learned the meaning of the doctrine of individuality. There remain, now, for Lawrence two more important themes to develop: the failure of Gerald's and Gudrun's relationship and the problem of Birkin's unresolved need for some kind of connection with Gerald in addition to

that which he has already established with Ursula. The treatment of the former theme is a rare artistic achievement, but the latter remains unresolved at the end of the novel so that Lawrence takes up this theme again in Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo, and The Plumed Serpent.

We have already pointed out how both Gerald and Gudrun violate the tenets of the doctrine of individuality. Both, we have seen, deny the instinctual life, both believe in the overweening power of the will, and both are deficient in preserving their integral selves. We have pointed out also how Gudrun recognizes in Gerald a kindred nature whose desire for fulfillment has as its means a progressive disintegration which Lawrence identifies with the African carving found in Halliday's rooms at Bloomsbury. The progressive disintegration, as exemplified by Gerald and Gudrun, is a major theme in Women in Love.

Lawrence is very skilful in emphasizing the fact that the relationship between this pair of lovers can only lead them to destruction. It is no accident that we have, in the novel, the detailed description of the death of Gerald's father, Mr. Crich. Lawrence contrasts the nature of Gerald's father and that of the young man and shows how neither attitude can result in fulfillment. The description of the

progressive deterioration of Mr. Crich helps to prepare the way for the eventual death of Gerald. And the fact that Gerald and Gudrun are making love at the very time that Thomas Crich is dying adds a note of the macabre to the nature of their relationship. Can anything good possibly result from a love born amidst such deathly surroundings?

The slow death of Mr. Crich has a nearly disastrous effect upon Gerald. Lawrence says, "His will held his outer life, his outer mind, his outer being unbroken and unchanged. But the pressure was too great. He would have to find something to make good the equilibrium."[77] It is this need in Gerald that leads him instinctively to Gudrun. One evening he asks her to stay to dinner and then afterwards he declares his need to her. Gudrun replies, "You must use me if I can be of any help at all--but how can I?"[78] In offering herself in this way for Gerald's use, Gudrun is violating the doctrine of individuality for the doctrine requires that one always keep the self intact. Later as the two stand under the archway of the bridge, both Gerald and Gudrun seem to fuse into one being, thus once again contradicting the doctrine. We read,

> His arms were fast around her, he seemed to be gathering her into himself, her warmth, her softness, her adorable weight, drinking in the suffusion of her physical being, avidly. He lifted her, and seemed to pour her into himself, like wine into a cup.[79]

There is nothing of the awful <u>otherness</u> which is characteristic of Birkin's and Ursula's relationship at its zenith. Gudrun and Gerald want just that mingling which Birkin finds so abhorrent. As Gerald holds Gudrun, she experiences the same kind of melting or fusion as he does:

> So she relaxed, and seemed to melt, to flow into him, as if she were some infinitely warm and precious suffusion filling into his veins, like an intoxicant. Her arms were round his neck, he kissed her and held her perfectly suspended, she was all slack and flowing into him, and he was the firm, strong cup that receives the wine of her life. So she lay cast upon him, stranded, lifted up against him, melting and melting under his kisses, melting into his limbs and bones, as if he were soft iron becoming surcharged with her electric life.
>
> Till she seemed to swoon, gradually her mind went, and she passed away, everything in her was melted down and fluid, and she lay still, become contained by him, sleeping in him, as lightning sleeps in pure soft stone. So she was passed away and gone in him, and he was perfected.[80]

Not only does Gudrun "melt" her being with Gerald, but she also, afterwards, is possessed with an insatiable desire to bring everything about him into her consciousness: she wants "complete knowledge" of him. Lawrence says,

"She wanted to touch him and touch him and touch him, till she had him all in her hands, till she had strained him into her knowledge."[81] The two lovers now part at the height of desire for each other, an act which denies the instinctual life, for as Gerald tells himself, in contradiction to Lawrence's perennial assertion otherwise, "to desire is better than to possess."[82]

Gerald does not see Gudrun until after Mr. Crich's death and then only in the presence of Winifred as they have tea in the studio above the stables. After she leaves, Gerald is left alone. It is his worst fear to be alone:

> ...he could not bear it. One day passed by, and another. All the time he was like a man hung in chains over the edge of an abyss. Struggle as he might, he could not turn himself to the solid earth, he could not get footing....He could not bear it. He was frightened deeply, and coldly, frightened in his soul. He could not believe in his own strength any more. He could not fall into this infinite void, and rise again. If he fell he would be gone forever. He must withdraw, he must seek reinforcements. <u>He did not believe</u> in his own single self, any further than this.[83]
>
> (Italics mine)

Thus in a state of distraction he goes out to look for Birkin, but Birkin is not at the mill. Gerald plunges on madly until almost uncannily he finds himself beside the Willey Green Church. As if he were gone mad he clambers

up the wall and goes among the graves.

> Even in this darkness he could see the heaped pallor of old white flowers at his feet. This then was the grave. He stooped down. The flowers were cold and clammy. There was a raw scent of chrysanthemums and tube-roses, deadened. He felt the clay beneath, and shrank, it was so horribly cold and sticky. He stood away in revulsion.[84]

Standing there beside "the unseen, raw grave" Gerald thinks of Gudrun; he must get to her. "He would not go back tonight till he had come to her, if it cost him his life."

Gerald's furtive entry into the Brangwen house, the mud on his boots, his dark coat wet from the rain, and his cap pulled down over his ears presage his union with Gudrun. It is not a union in which both man and woman balance each other like stars, but one in which the woman envelops the man and soothes him as a mother would a child. Their relationship is the very antithesis of that achieved by Birkin and Ursula; it is the kind of relationship that Birkin put aside just before he made up his mind to propose marriage to Ursula. This is what Gudrun is to Gerald:

> ...she was the great bath of life, he worshipped her. Mother and substance of all life she was. And he, child and man, received of her and was made whole. His pure body was almost killed. But the miraculous,

> soft effluence of her breast suffused over him, over his seared, damaged brain, like a healing lymph, like a soft, soothing flow of life itself, perfect as if he were bathed in the womb again.[85]

And what about the effect on Gudrun herself? Lawrence says,

> She was exhausted, wearied. Yet she must continue in this state of violent active superconsciousness. She was conscious of everything--her childhood, her girlhood, all the forgotten incidents, all the unrealized influences and all the happenings she had not understood, pertaining to herself, to her family, to her friends, her lovers, her acquaintances, everybody. It was as if she drew a glittering rope of knowledge out of the sea of darkness, drew and drew and drew it out of the fathomless depths of the past, and still it did not come to an end, there was no end to it, she must haul and haul at the rope of glittering consciousness, pull it out phosphorescent from the endless depths of the unconsciousness, till she was weary, aching, exhausted, and fit to break, and yet she had not done.[86]

In the morning Gudrun wakes Gerald and accompanies him outside through the backdoor lest anyone should see him.

After this episode, Gerald and Birkin are having a conversation on the question of marriage. Gerald has told Birkin that perhaps they might make it a "double-barrelled" affair and the latter asks if marriage, that is a relationship with one woman, is really enough. The following piece of conversation indicates that Birkin

is still troubled by the need of some additional relationship besides that which he has achieved with Ursula. We hear Birkin saying:

> "I do believe in a permanent union between a man and a woman. Chopping about is merely an exhaustive process. But a permanent relation between a man and a woman isn't the last word--it certainly isn't."
> "Quite," said Gerald.
> "In fact," said Birkin, "because the relation between man and woman is made the supreme and exclusive relationship, that's where all the tightness and meanness and insufficiency comes in."
> "Yes, I believe you," said Gerald.
> "You've got to take down the love-and-marriage ideal from its pedestal. We want something broader. I believe in the additional perfect relationship between man and man--additional to marriage."
> "I can never see how they can be the same," said Gerald.
> "Not the same--but equally important, equally creative, equally sacred, if you like."
> "I know," said Gerald, "you believe something like that. Only I can't feel it, you see."[87]

The reason why Gerald cannot see Birkin's point of view is quite obvious. His essential nature is different and his relationship with Gudrun cannot admit any other relationship since it is all-consuming. Besides, we know that Gerald is headed towards death and it is no wonder to discover that "He was willing to condemn himself to marriage, to become like a convict condemned to the mines of the underworld, living no life in the sun, but having a dreadful subterranean activity."[88]

Birkin discusses the need for further relationships with Ursula and this discussion, like that with Gerald, ends unresolved. Ursula asks Birkin,

> "Why should you hanker after other people? Why should you need them?"
> This hit him right on the quick. His brows knitted.
> "Does it end with just our two selves?" he asked, tense.
> "Yes--what more do you want? If anybody likes to come along, let them. But why must you run after them?"
> His face was tense and unsatisfied.
> "You see," he said, "I always imagine our being really happy with some few other people--a little freedom with people."
> She pondered for a moment.
> "Yes, one does want that. But it must <u>happen</u>. You can't do anything for it with your will. You always seem to think you can <u>force</u> the flowers to come out. People must love us because they love us--you can't <u>make</u> them."
> "I know," he said. "But must one take no steps at all? Must one just go as if one were alone in the world--the only creature in the world?"
> "You've got me," she said. "Why should you <u>need</u> others? Why must you force people to agree with you? Why can't you be single by yourself, as you are always saying? You try to bully Gerald, as you tried to bully Hermione. You must learn to be alone. And it's so horrible of you. You've got me. And yet you want to force other people to love you as well. You do try to bully them to love you. And even then, you don't want their love."
> His face was full of real perplexity.
> "Don't I? he said. "It's the problem I can't solve. I <u>know</u> I want a perfect and complete relationship with you: and we've nearly got it--we really have. But beyond that. <u>Do</u> I want a real, ultimate relationship with Gerald? Do I want a final, almost extra-human relationship with him--a relationship in the ultimate of me and him--
> or don't I?"[89]

Even though Birkin is uncertain as to whether or not he really needs Gerald, he has no doubt in his mind about Ursula. He believes in marriage--of this he is certain. But the consummation comes a little prematurely for Ursula quarrels with her parents and escapes to Birkin. Lawrence describes their consummation thus:

> In the new, superfine bliss, a peace superceding knowledge, there was no I and you, there was only the third unrealized wonder, the wonder of existing not as oneself, but in a consummation of my being and her being in a new one, a new paradisal unit regained from the duality. How can I say, "I love you," when I have ceased to be: we are both caught up and transcended into a new oneness where everything is silent, because there is nothing to answer, all is perfect and at one. Speech travels between separate parts. But in the perfect One there is perfect silence of bliss.[90]

Ursula and Birkin are married the next day. They are both so happy that Gudrun suddenly envies her sister. "How deeply, how suddenly she envied Ursula! Life for her was so quick, and an open door--so reckless as if not only this world, but the world that was gone and the world to come were nothing to her. Ah, if she could be <u>just like</u> that, it would be perfect."[91] However, Gudrun cannot be satisfied with Gerald, and we are told, "she was never to be satisfied."

The two couples plan to go abroad together, but just before that Gerald and Gudrun spend one night in London. Although she hates the Café, Gudrun is drawn to it. "It was as if she had to return to this small, slow central whirlpool of disintegration and dissolution: just give it a look."[92] Here at the Pompadour we have a piece of superb drama, for while the members of Bohemia are ridiculing Birkin, ironically they are condemning themselves. The reader knows, even if that ghastly crew does not, that they are headed towards destruction in having chosen the way to consummation through corruption, "reducing the old ideas, going back to the savages for (their) sensations".[93] These so-called "artists" do not realize just how corrupt their lives really are.

Gudrun and Gerald do not free themselves by walking out of the Pompadour; they are doomed to destruction, and the sojourn on the continent presents this destruction in dramatic terms. There, in the Austrian Tyrol, they meet the sculptor Loerke who becomes the symbol and the instrument of their disintegration. From the first moment that she sees him, Gudrun feels herself attracted to Loerke. Nevertheless, he refuses, temporarily, to make his contact with her. Lawrence says,

> He wanted very much to dance with Gudrun. From the first moment he had seen her, he wanted to make a connection with her. Instinctively she felt this, and she waited for him to come up. But a kind of sulkiness kept him away from her, so she thought he disliked her.[94]

Before she joins up with Loerke, Gudrun is destined first to drain all the sensations she can out of Gerald and then to combat him.

> The deep resolve formed in her, to combat him. One of them must triumph over the other. Which should it be? Her soul steeled itself with strength. Almost she laughed within herself, at her confidence. It woke a certain keen, half contemptuous pity, tenderness for him: she was so ruthless.[95]

One morning she sees him sleeping, and for a few moments she is carried away on the wings of ambition for she sees in him the strength which can achieve mastery over any concrete problem that the world may present. She imagines herself as the woman behind a great man such as Napoleon or Bismarck and even sees Gerald as being "freer, more dauntless than Bismarck." Yet even this dream turns cynical in her; "the last flavour of everything was ironical." Gudrun sees Gerald not as a separate entity, another being with a soul of his own, as the doctrine of individuality demands she should see him; rather, he is to her an "instrument". "To her mind, he was a pure,

"inhuman, almost superhuman instrument. His instrumentality appealed so strongly to her, she wished she were God, to use him as a tool."[96] Ironically enough, Gerald becomes the victim of his own philosophy for he himself regards other people as "instruments". It may be recalled that when he decided to reform the mining industry he concluded that every man was an instrument to be used according to his deserts.

Still, the two lovers spend many hours in a high state of pleasure, but this state of excitement has a symbolic, almost fatal significance. Together they explore the great white slopes and each time as they go downhill we become more and more acutely aware that their actions are symptomatic of their common maladies. Lawrence says,

> The first few days passed in an ecstasy of physical motion, sleighing, ski-ing, skating, moving in an intensity of speed and white light that surpassed life itself, and carried the souls of the human beings into an inhuman abstraction of velocity and weight and eternal, frozen snow.[97]

There is no warmth in their relationship, no expression of the instinctual life, nothing that can be compared with the relationship which exists between Ursula and Birkin who both realize the awful desolation of the mountains. It is only because Birkin and Ursula "are

"warm and together" that they are able to endure "the stillness, the cold, the frozen eternality."

A day of snow comes which makes it necessary for the whole party to remain indoors. Gudrun is anxious to talk to Loerke since she has learned that he is a sculptor. She finds him intriguing, having an "uncanny singleness, a quality of being by himself, not in contact with anybody else."[98] In contrast to the manly figure of Gerald, Loerke's body is small, "like a boy's", but Gudrun finds this particularly interesting for she is in search of the "black-art" which is her raison d'etre. Lawrence says:

> To Gudrun, there was in Loerke the rock-bottom of all life. Everybody else had their illusion, must have their illusion, their before and after. But he, with a perfect stoicism, did without any before and after, dispensed with all illusion. He did not deceive himself in the last issue....He existed a pure, unconnected will, stoical and momentaneous. There was only his work.[99]

Her attraction to Loerke is another step towards her fulfillment through progressive disintegration. Loerke, himself, has come a long way along this road. Birkin characterizes Loerke perfectly when he says, "He is a gnawing little negation, gnawing at the roots of life."[100] The statuette of the naked little girl mounted on the

rigid massive stallion identifies Loerke with both Gerald and Gudrun who are enemies of the instinctual life. Like Gudrun, Loerke believes in art for art's sake for he thinks that a work of art has "nothing to do with anything but itself."

Ursula is not taken in by the esoteric talk between Gudrun and her new-found degenerate. It is Ursula who voices Lawrence's criticism of the "art for art's sake" doctrine. She says,

> It isn't a word of it true, of all this harangue you have made me...The horse is a picture of your own stock, stupid brutality, and the girl was a girl you loved and tortured and then ignored...As for your world of art and your world of reality... you have to separate the two, because you can't bear to know what you are. You can't bear to realize what a stock, stiff, hide-bound brutality you <u>are</u> really, so you say 'it's the world of art'. The world of art is only the truth about the real world, that's all--but you are too far gone to see it.[101]

After this encounter, Ursula can no longer bear the place; she must leave at once. "It occurred to her," says Lawrence, "like a miracle, that she might go away into another world."[102] This "other world" is, by contrast, a warm world.

> Now suddenly, as by a miracle she remembered that away beyond, below her, lay the dark fruitful earth, that towards the south there were stretches of land dark with orange trees and cypress, grey with olives, that ilex trees lifted wonderful plumy tufts in shadows against a blue sky. Miracle of Miracles!--

> this utterly silent, frozen world of the mountain-tops was not universal! One might leave it and have done with. One might go away.[103]

But Gerald and Gudrun are not able to leave it; they are doomed to stay behind. Gerald utters the prophetic words: "There's something final about this. And Gudrun seems like the end to me." Gudrun tries to tell Ursula that it is no use going away because no matter where one goes, the "great ideas of the world are the same". She tries to prove her point by saying that Ursula herself "can't get away from the fact that love, for instance, is the supreme thing." Ursula answers Gudrun in a way that shows she has fully grasped Birkin's idea that love is not supreme, that there is something greater. When Ursula says, "Love is too human and little. I believe in something inhuman, of which love is only a little part. I believe that what we must fulfil comes out of the unknown to us, and it is something infinitely more than love," we see that she has accepted the doctrine of individuality for her belief. There was a time, we may recall, when she clashed with Birkin on this very point.

Thus Ursula and Birkin leave; Gudrun and Gerald stay behind. As Birkin watches the latter, Lawrence says,

"Something froze in Birkin's heart, seeing them standing there in the isolation of the snow, growing smaller and more isolated."[104] Now that Birkin and Ursula are gone, Gudrun feels herself free to fight it out with Gerald. But whereas Gerald is alone, Gudrun has an extra "resource" in Loerke; the triangle takes shape, and it is a contest to the death. The artistic subtlety with which Lawrence develops the chapter called "Snowed Up" is remarkable. To follow, therefore, the relationships among the three characters presents a problem in that one can hardly give a true account of the conflict by citing isolated instances. In the main, however, we see that Loerke and Gudrun are deniers of life. Witness the following piece of conversation which is typical of their outlook:

> "Of course," said Gudrun, "life doesn't <u>really</u> matter--it is one's art which is central. What one does in one's life has <u>peu de rapport</u>, it doesn't signify much."
>
> "Yes, that is so, exactly," replied the sculptor. "What one does in one's art, that is the breath of one's being. What one does in one's life, that is a bagatelle for the outsiders to fuss about."[105]

Against such an outlook, Gerald is left impotent for he is not an artist, his is the life of action, of physical movement and, finally, of violence. He soon begins to feel Loerke's subtle influence in Gudrun's veins

and this becomes abhorrent to him. He is unable to see why she is attracted to Loerke who has "no handsomeness or nobleness, to account for a woman's subjection". But Gudrun knows that she can get nothing more out of Gerald in the realm of sensations. Loerke, with his pure will, can take her further along the path of "subtle thrills of extreme sensation in reduction". Lawrence says, "She had further to go, a further, slow exquisite experience to reap, unthinkable subtleties of sensation to know, before she was finished."[106]

But to Gerald the thought of Loerke and Gudrun becomes unbearable; he knows that this is the end for him. Once when he is alone with her he is possessed by a desire to kill her, but she becomes aware of his thoughts and flees to the safety of her room. There she meditates on her life, on what it would mean to go back to England, on Gerald's failure as her lover. She sees some hope in a life with Loerke, at least she would be free of the conventional world and it would be interesting, she decides, to "take part in German Bohemian life".

The next morning she goes out tobogganning with Loerke while Gerald goes out skiing by himself. As Loerke and Gudrun are eating lunch and drinking there in

the snow, Gerald comes upon them like a ghost. Lawrence says: "To Gerald, the smallish, odd figure of the German was distinct and objective, as if seen through field glasses. And he disliked the small figure exceedingly, he wanted it removed."[107] Gerald knocks Loerke down and begins to strangle Gudrun, but a revulsion of contempt and disgust comes over him at what he is doing and he stops, for he decides that he does not care enough about her to kill her and to have "her life on his hands". His last confession to his soul is, "I didn't want it really."

Blindly Gerald leaves Loerke and Gudrun. His one thought is to go on and on, to "keep in action". Lawrence says,

> He only wanted to go on, to go on whilst he could, to move, to keep going, that was all, to keep going, until it was finished. He had lost all sense of place. And yet in the remaining instinct of life, his feet sought the track where the skis had gone.[108]

Thus "he wandered unconsciously, till he slipped and fell down, and as he fell something broke in his soul, and immediately he went to sleep."[109]

The death of Gerald brings <u>Women in Love</u> to a close, but it does not resolve the theme of a man-to-man relationship

which has been present in the novel from the very beginning. Gudrun goes to Dresden, and Ursula and Birkin return to the mill near Beldover, but the novel does not solve Birkin's need for a male friendship, "an eternal union with a man". Thus the novel ends on an uncertain note, with Ursula saying,

> "You can't have two kinds of love. Why should you?"
> "It seems as if I can't," he said. "Yet I wanted it."
> "You can't have it, because it's false, impossible," she said.
> "I don't believe that," he answered.[110]

Birkin's uncertainty is understandable for the doctrine of individuality asserts that,

> Men being themselves made new after the act of coition, wish to make the world new. A new passionate polarity springs up between men who are bent on the same activity, the polarity between man and woman sinks into passivity. It is now daytime, and time to forget sex, time to be busy making a new world.[111]

Men engaged in making a new world, the novel Women in Love has not shown us. In this sense, therefore, artistically a very important part of the doctrine of individuality has not been expressed by Lawrence. Women in Love does establish the woman and man relationship, but for a treatment of the man and man relationship and the creative activity in which

men must engage in order to come to fulfillment we must search in Lawrence's other works.

IV: Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo, and The Plumed Serpent

The three novels Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo, and The Plumed Serpent are all attempts by Lawrence to deal with two aspects of the doctrine of individuality. These two aspects are very closely related and may be described as the establishment of a man-and-man relationship and the description of the kind of creative activity in which men, having perfected their relationships with each other, may find their ultimate fulfillment. It must be said at the outset that none of the three novels in question attains the high level of artistic achievement which unquestionably belongs to both The Rainbow and Women in Love. The earlier novels are unified works of art in which ideas are given dramatic and convincing expression. Aaron's Rod and Kangaroo, on the other hand, are loosely constructed books; they contain a great deal of material which is extraneous to the central issues of the novels and for this reason are hard to interpret. The Plumed Serpent, perhaps the best novel of the latter group, is

still in many ways like its predecessors and it fails in the end to be finally convincing as a work of art. The object of this part of our study is to examine in turn Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo, and The Plumed Serpent and to indicate in what way they help to elucidate the doctrine of individuality.

Even a single reading of Aaron's Rod will disclose that in the novel there is a difference between what Lawrence sets out to do and what he actually does. This criticism is also true of Kangaroo and The Plumed Serpent. In Aaron's Rod, Lawrence sets out to describe that relationship between man and man which he feels must be established before the individual can come to his own fulfillment. He selects for his purpose the two characters, Rawdon Lilly and Aaron Sisson and it is the establishment of a permanent relationship between these two men that purports to form the major theme in the novel. The reader expects, therefore, that the other characters and events in the book will contribute in some way towards the advancement of the major theme; the result is, in fact, quite the contrary. Aaron's Rod does not come to grips with the problem which Lawrence poses at the beginning of

the novel and it is this failure to deal with the major theme which marks the novel as a deficient work of art. Not only is the development of the theme uneven throughout the book, but there are many pages in Aaron's Rod where the man and man relationship is completely forgotten and where we feel that the novelist has lost control of his material. There is, to be sure, much brilliant commentary and some unparalleled description, but neither of these achievements helps to clear up the main issues.

According to the doctrine of individuality as it is presented in The Rainbow and in Women in Love, the individual must, in the first instance, learn to possess his soul in isolation. Having arrived at this stage of independence, he must establish a relationship with a woman based on the principle of otherness; this relationship, if it is successful, will enable the man to go to work in some larger creative activity. If we examine Aaron's Rod, we find that there is only one character who can measure up to the standards set down in the doctrine of individuality; this character is not Aaron Sisson, but Rawdon Lilly. Here, then, we have the source of the failure in the novel in that the main character attempts to establish the secondary relationship of man and man, without having succeeded in the primary relationship of man and woman. It is Lilly

who points out the correct pattern to Aaron, for he himself has fulfilled at least one of the cardinal requirements of the doctrine. Both Lilly and his wife, Tanny, have learned to "possess their souls in patience and peace." Lilly says,

> "I think a man may come into possession of his own soul at last--as the Buddhists teach--but without ceasing to love, or even to hate. One loves, one hates--but somewhere beyond it all, one understands, and one possesses one's soul in patience and peace--...
>
> I am learning to possess my soul in patience and in peace, and I know it. And it isn't a negative Nirvana either. And if Tanny possesses her own soul in patience and peace as well--and if in this we understand each other at last--then there we are, together and apart at the same time, and free of each other, and eternally inseparable. I have my Nirvana--and I have it all to myself. But more than that. It coincides with her Nirvana....
>
> You learn to be quite alone, and possess your own soul in isolation--and at the same time, to be perfectly <u>with</u> somebody else--that is all I ask....
>
> It's what you get after a lot of fighting and a lot of sensual fulfillment. And it never does away with the fighting and the sensual passion. It flowers on top of them, and it would never flower save on top of them.[1]

In this statement, Lilly makes clear the goal which Aaron should be striving to attain. How far, we may ask, does Aaron succeed even at the end of the novel? The answer is, of course, that Aaron Sisson never gets beyond learning how to be alone and there is good reason to say that perhaps

he does not fully succeed even in this. He is a poor candidate from the start since, in having left his wife, he has admitted defeat in establishing a relationship with her. For Lawrence, therefore, to try to show him attempting to form a permanent relationship with Lilly is a serious blunder. It is impossible for the reader to accept the idea that in the behavior of Aaron there is something to be watched and something from which we may get a clearer insight into ourselves. We shall see later that it is also this kind of criticism that must be levelled against Don Ramon, the would-be saviour of Mexico in The Plumed Serpent.

Aaron's failure with his wife is brought painfully to light when he returns home to the Midlands after spending a holiday with some Bohemian friends in London. The scene enacted in his house between his wife, Lottie, and him reveals how absolutely their marriage has failed. Lawrence does not explain exactly what the cause of the failure is, but it is not difficult to see that Aaron has suffered at the hands of a woman too self-conscious to enable both husband and wife to find sensual fulfillment. Lottie's insistent references to the dark and evil nature of Aaron indicate that she is aware that she has failed

him sexually. There is, of course, no alternative left to Aaron; it is better for him to be alone than to try to go on living with this woman who, "come life, come death...would never yield." Aaron seems to enjoy being alone.

> He looked at the sky, and thanked the universe for the blessedness of being alone in the universe. To be alone, to be oneself, not to be driven or violated into something which is not oneself, surely it is better than anything.[2]

It is necessary for Aaron to find sensual fulfillment, but he does not find it; he leaves his wife and goes to Italy. But already he is on the wrong track if he is hoping to liberate his singleness of being. Fulfillment is based on marriage and Aaron wants to be "alone". Lawrence explains to us what went wrong between Aaron and his wife, but the explanation is pure exposition so that from an artistic point of view it represents a failure on Lawrence's part. When he is at his best, Lawrence is always able to find a dramatic means to express his ideas; the use of plain statement is not convincing. But even if Lawrence did present dramatically the failure between Lottie and Aaron, the novel would still be deficient. The novel sets out to present the relationship between man and

man, the relationship which is an additional one to that of marriage, and the presentation of the failure of marriage will not advance the main theme.

The only part in Aaron's Rod which makes anything like a direct approach to the conscious theme of the novel is an episode in which Rawdon Lilly nurses Aaron. Here, at least on the surface, we might expect to find the establishment of some kind of a bond between the two men, but we only get a restatement of what we have already been told before in Lawrence's previous works:

> Everybody ought to stand by themselves, in the first place--men and women as well. They can come together, in the second place, if they like. But nothing is any good unless each one stands alone, intrinsically.[3]

This is as much as Aaron ever learns.

The problem for Lawrence, as a novelist, is to show that besides marriage man needs a permanent relationship with other men, but in choosing Aaron Sisson as the central figure for his book, he fails to deal with this problem. To work out the problem, Lawrence should have a man who has made a marriage, a marriage which results in sensual fulfillment. Aaron Sisson is clearly no such person. When we come to the end of the novel, the result is that

Aaron is still being told by Lilly, "There is only one thing, your own very self. So you'd better stick to it." Lilly, of course, realizes that Aaron has failed to establish a relationship with a woman and that at this moment there is no alternative for him but to admit this failure. If Aaron is not to admit that life is too much for him, he must respect his integral self. "Your own singleness," says Lilly,

> "is your destiny. Your destiny comes from within, from your own self-form. And you can't know beforehand, neither your destiny nor your self-form. You can only develop it. You can only stick to your own very self, and never <u>betray</u> it. And by so sticking, you develop the one and only phoenix of your own self, and you unfold your own destiny, as a dandelion unfolds itself into a dandelion, and not into a stick of celery."[4]

Aaron is thus left in very much the same position as Ursula is at the end of <u>The Rainbow</u>. If this is so, then <u>Aaron's Rod</u> has nothing new to present to us that we have not already had presented in <u>The Rainbow</u>. <u>Women in Love</u> does, in fact, go a step further than <u>Aaron's Rod</u> for it grapples with the woman and man relationship. As a novel, therefore, <u>Aaron's Rod</u> is a step backward. Lawrence does not go back on what he says in the previous novels for the doctrine of individuality is still the basis of his thinking. In Lilly's words,

> "I don't go back on what I said before. I do believe that every man must fulfil his own soul, every woman must be herself, herself only, not some man's instrument, or some embodied theory. But the mode of our being is such that we can only live and have our being whilst we are implicit in one of the great dynamic modes. We must either love, or rule. And once the love-mode changes, as change it must, for we are worn out and becoming evil in its persistence, then the other mode will take place in us. And there will be profound, profound obedience in place of this love-crying, obedience to the incalculable power-urge. And men must submit to the greater soul in a man, for their guidance: and women must submit to the positive power-soul in man, for their being.[5]

There is only a hint here as to what might be the basis for a new relationship among men, the suggestion that it might be based on a recognition of power. Not only must women submit to the power in men, but men must submit to the power in other men, and on this will be built the new world order. This idea that power must constitute the relationship between man and man is not developed in Aaron's Rod for with the introduction of this new idea the novel comes to a close. Aaron's Rod is, therefore, merely a sort of "looking ahead" to Kangaroo and to The Plumed Serpent in which Lawrence deals more directly with the problem which only haunts the earlier novel.

Although Kangaroo is a loosely constructed novel, it makes a much more definite impression upon the reader than does Aaron's Rod. For purposes of developing the

man-and-man relationship and describing the creative activity in which men can work together, Kangaroo contains at least some of the artistic pre-requisites. The central character, Richard Lovat Somers, does meet the initial conditions set down in the doctrine of individuality. He has succeeded in preserving his singleness of being and in establishing a permanent relationship with a woman. In spite of its many battles, the marriage of Richard and Harriet is firmly established, so much so that Harriet is quite willing to retreat from society altogether and live apart just with her husband. She, therefore, says to Somers, "And why couldn't we be happy in this wonderful new country, living to ourselves. We could have a cow, and chickens--and then the Pacific, and this marvellous new country. Surely this is enough for any man. Why must you have more?"[6]

It is this question which opens up the major themes of the novel. In answer to Harriet's question, Somers replies that he "must fight out something with mankind yet." He adds, "I haven't finished with my fellow-men. I've got a struggle with them yet." He feels that he has to "make some kind of an opening--some kind of a way for the afterwards".[7] "I intend," says Somers, "to move

"with men and to get men to move with me before I die.... or at any rate I'll try a bit longer. When I make up my mind that it's really no good, I'll go with you and we'll live alone somewhere together, and forget the world."[8]

From the beginning of Kangaroo, therefore, it is clear what the main themes of the novel are going to be. In showing the attempt which Somers is going to make in an effort to move with men and to have men move with him, Lawrence is going to deal with social implications of the man-and-man relationship. The doctrine of individuality is to be carried a step further than Lawrence has hitherto developed it; man will be shown living, not only in a pure relationship with his wife, but also working with other men in the larger context of human society and bringing some kind of creative enterprise to birth. Lawrence has, up to now, given only this latter idea expression in his prose; he has not shown us in a novel men working together in a creative activity. This is the problem which Kangaroo takes up.

As a novel, Kangaroo does help to illuminate the question of what is to serve as a basis for the man-to-man relationship. Although the novel throws light on the subject, it does not, finally, present a workable basis.

It explores, in the first place, the problem of how man's relationship with other men is to be reconciled with marriage; in the second place, Kangaroo attacks the notion that love can be a sound basis for male relationships. What Kangaroo also attempts to do, but fails in doing, is to present an alternative to love.

If we proceed to examine the novel, we see that the nature of the creative activity in which the leading character, Richard Somers, might work with other men is revealed to him by Jack Callcott, an ex-soldier who belongs to a secret society called the Diggers. From Jack's explanation, Somers gathers that the aim of the society is "apparently, a sort of revolution and a seizing of political power." Somers is very much impressed, but his heart is heavy.

> Why did his heart feel so heavy? Politics--conspiracy--political power: it was all so alien to him. Somehow in his soul he always meant something quite different, when he thought of action along with other men....His heart refused to respond.[9]

This hesitancy on Somers' part is important in that from the very beginning Somers is uneasy to come into league with Callcott and his fellow organizers. However, Lawrence makes the comment that "here was his chance, if he wanted to be a leader of men. He had only to give himself, give

"himself up to it, and to the men."[10] The problem, then, that is faced by Somers is how to preserve his individuality and at the same time submit to the authority of the other men; it is this problem that Kangaroo must solve.

There is another problem, too. How does this activity fit into his relationship with Harriet? Beforehand, Somers has made up his mind that "this impersonal business of male activity for which he was always craving" would not be held "subject to Harriet's approval or disapproval". Lawrence says,

> She (Harriet) emphatically opposed this principle of her externality. She agreed with the necessity for impersonal activity, but oh, she insisted on being identified with the activity, impersonal or not. And he insisted that could not and should not be: that the pure male activity should be womanless, beyond woman. No man was beyond woman. But in this one quality of ultimate maker or breaker, he was womanless. Harriet denied this bitterly. She wanted to share, to join in, not to be left out lonely. He looked at her in distress and did not answer. It is a knot that can never be untied; it can only, like a navel string, be broken or cut.[11]

Lawrence considers the relationship of Somers with the other men first. It is Callcott who offers to be Somers' mate, who says, "If you'd once come over--why man, do you think I wouldn't lay my life down for you?"[12] What Callcott offers is really an act of supreme sacrifice, but the doctrine of individuality does not admit this kind of

sacrifice, and so it is not surprising that Somers doesn't "want anybody laying down their lives for him". According to Lawrence, "He didn't <u>believe</u> in it: in that way of love". Still, Somers has always felt the need for a lasting relationship with another man, but "when it came to the point, he didn't want any more affection".

> All his life he had cherished a beloved ideal of friendship--David and Jonathan. And now, when true and good friends offered, he found he simply could not commit himself, even to simple friendship. The whole trend of this affection, this mingling, this intimacy, this truly beautiful love, he found his soul just set against it. He couldn't go along with it. He didn't want a friend, he didn't want loving affection, he didn't want comradeship.[13]

If Somers does not want a relationship based on love, what does he want? Lawrence answers: "What else? He didn't know....Perhaps the thing the dark races know: that one can still feel in India: the mystery of lordship". Thus, even before Somers meets Kangaroo, who is the head of the revolutionary movement in Australia, he has made up his mind that he "would never pledge himself to Jack, nor to this venture in which Jack was concerned."

Somers' first meeting with Kangaroo, the leader of the Diggers, is dramatically related. Somers is very much

moved by this strange individual whose ideas appear to be very much like those of the poet and essayist himself. And Harriet, after having dinner with Kangaroo writes to him stating, "But I do want you to know you have my sympathy--and my Lovat."[14] In confidence, she tells her husband her real feelings about Kangaroo. "I think he's rather foolish." When Somers goes to visit Kangaroo again, this time alone, they have a verbal battle. Kangaroo insists that love is the only inspiration for real creative activity, but Somers disagrees. To the latter's mind, the inspiration of love is worn out. He says, "I don't quite believe that love is the one and only exclusive force or mystery of living inspiration. I don't quite believe that. There is something else."[15] This "something else" is, according to Somers, the unknown force which is working through man. It is this "great God at the threshold" of man's lower self that must now be obeyed by men.

Whatever the nature of the creative activity in which Somers might join with Kangaroo and the other men of Australia, and whatever the basis on which his relationships with these men is to be established, the pressing question which Lawrence must now answer is that

of the relation of this activity to Somers' marriage with Harriet. It must be remembered that the doctrine of individuality demands that man must make a marriage first, before he can go on to the creative activity and Somers, it appears, has made up his mind that Harriet shall have no part in his venture. Lawrence draws our attention to this inconsistency in Somers' thinking by stating explicitly what the novel does implicitly:

> But Harriet was not going to be ignored: no, she was not. She was not going to sink herself to the level of a convenience. She didn't really want protestations of gratitude or love. They only puzzled her and confused her. But she wanted him <u>inwardly</u> to keep a connection with her. Silently, he must maintain the flow between him and her, and safeguard it carefully. It is a thing which a man cannot do with his head: it isn't <u>remembering</u>. And it is a thing which a woman cannot explain or understand, because it is quite irrational. But it is one of the deepest realities in life. When a man and a woman truly come together, when there is a marriage, then an unconscious, vital connection is established between them, like a throbbing blood-circuit. A man may forget a woman entirely with his head, and fling himself with energy and fervour into whatever job he is tackling, and all is well, all is good, if he does not break that inner vital connection which is the mystery of marriage. But let him once get out of unison, out of conjunction, let him inwardly break loose and come apart, let him fall into that worst of male vices, the vice of abstraction and mechanization, and have a concert of working <u>alone</u> and of himself, then he commits the breach. He hurts the woman and he hurts himself, though neither may know why. The greatest hero that ever existed was heroic only whilst he kept the throbbing inner union with something. God, or Fatherland, or woman. The most immediate is woman,

> the wife. But the most grovelling wife-worshippers are the foulest of traitors and renegades to the inner unison. A man must strive onward, but from the root of marriage, marriage with God, with wife, with mankind. Like a tree that is rooted, always growing and flowering away from its root, so is a vitally active man. But let him take some false direction, and there is torture through the whole organism, roots and all. The woman suffers blindly from the man's mistaken direction, and reacts blindly.[16]

Lawrence analyzes the conflict between Somers and Harriet in the chapter called "Harriet and Lovat at Sea in Marriage". In this chapter Somers is obviously Lawrence himself and Harriet is his wife, Frieda, and the naked honesty with which Lawrence presents the relationship shows how unbiased his intelligence could be. The portrait of Somers as "the most forlorn and isolated creature in the world, without even a dog to his command" is by no means a flattering one. The reason why Harriet cannot accept her husband as lord and master is given by Lawrence in these words:

> He did not yet submit to the fact which he <u>half</u> knew: that before mankind would accept any man for a king, and before Harriet would accept him, Richard Lovat, as a lord and master, he, the self-same Richard who was so strong on kingship, must open the doors of his soul and let in a dark Lord and Master for himself, the dark god he had sensed outside the door. Let him once truly submit to the dark majesty, break open his doors to this fearful god who is master, and enters us from below, the lower doors; let him once admit a Master, the unspeakable god: the rest would happen.[17]

This mention of the "dark god" does not solve the problem of how Somers' activities are to be fitted into his relationship of marriage. Lawrence does not show us that this recognition of the "dark god" arises out of the experience of Somers and Harriet; he uses the idea of the "dark god" as a sort of excursion into mysticism on which the reader is unable to follow him. Throughout Kangaroo we have innumerable references to the "dark god", but we are never shown precisely what the "dark god" is in terms of human experience. We know, however, that this recognition of the "dark god" is really another way of saying that man must yield to the unknown which is working through man and by obeying the unknown man can then bring himself into full flower. "The only thing is the God who is the source of all passion. Once go down before the God-passion and human passions take their right rhythm."[18] Although Lawrence makes this statement, the novel does not give the statement flesh and blood.

The reason why Somers is, presumably, unwilling to join Willie Struthers' labour movement in Australia is that it is a movement based on the desire of the masses; it refers to no deep principle, and Somers does not wish to serve merely the will of the masses. He says,

> "I try to kid myself that I care about mankind and its destiny. And I have fits of wistful love for the working men. But at bottom I'm hard as a mango nut. I don't care about them all. I don't really care about anything, no I don't. I just don't care, so what's the good of fussing."[19]

After making this confession to Struthers, Somers goes to Kangaroo. The conflict between Somers and Kangaroo does not resolve the basis on which a valid relationship between men might be established. What Lawrence succeeds in showing with consummate skill is that "love" cannot be the basis, but he does not really convince us as to what the basis should be. Kangaroo asks him what his case is against him. Somers replies: "It's not a case...it's a sort of instinct...against your insistence. And against the whole sticky stream of love, and the hateful will-to-love. It's the will-to-love that I hate, Kangaroo."[20] What Somers means is that Kangaroo's plan to set up a new state in Australia based on love between man and man will not work. He adds, "Don't love me. Don't want me to love you. Let's be hard separate men. Let's understand one another deeper than love... Let us start as men, with the great gods beyond us."[21] Once again we are left with the idea that the basis for

a relationship among men must be their mutual recognition of the "dark god", but we are not informed as to how this recognition can come about.

After his criticism of Kangaroo's position, Somers is asked to leave Australia; as he leaves the office of the leader he becomes intensely aware of the ugliness of Kangaroo. Somers' abhorrence of the physical appearance of Kangaroo coincides with his revulsion against the ideal which Kangaroo represents. Lawrence describes Somers' feelings in these words:

> He (Kangaroo) had become again hideous, with a long yellowish face and black eyes close together, and a cold mindless, dangerous hulk to his shoulders.... He (Somers) stood up in a kind of horror, in front of the great, close-eyed thing that was now Kangaroo. Yes, a thing, not a whole man. A great Thing, a horror.[22]

It is following this interview that Somers has his nightmare in which he relives his experiences during the war in England. It was during the war that "Somers had known what it was to live in a perpetual state of semi-fear: the fear of the criminal public and the criminal government."[23] Lawrence's literary purpose in recounting Somers' nightmare is to establish Richard's individuality, but the chapter does not carry the novel forward; it merely reinforces what we have already seen is true of Somers'

character. The fact that the episodes of the chapter have a definite autobiographical basis does not weaken the writing, but the chapter does not serve as an elucidation of the meaning of the "dark god", nor does it tell how men might come to a mutual recognition of his power. The experiences of Somers during the war serve to reveal that first and foremost a man must learn to accept his own individuality, but this is only the first stage on the road to fulfillment. Lawrence says,

> Richard Lovat had nothing to hang on to but his own soul. So he hung on to it, and tried to keep his wits. If no man was with him, he was hardly aware of it, he had to grip on so desperately, like a man on a plank in a shipwreck. The plank was his own individual self. (Italics mine.)[24]

The constant harrowing of the authorities and the feeling of being watched frighten Somers at first, but in the end he learns to stand alone.

> So he discovered the great secret: to stand alone as his own judge of himself, absolutely. He took his stand absolutely on his own judgment of himself. Then the mongrel-mouthed world would say and do what it liked. This is the greatest secret of behavior: to stand alone, and to judge oneself from the deeps of one's soul. And then, to know, to hear what the others say and think: to refer their judgment to the touchstone of one's own soul-judgment. To fear one's own inward soul, and never to fear the outside world, nay, not even one single person, nor even fifty million persons.

> To learn to be afraid of nothing but one's own deepest soul: but to keep a sharp eye on the millions of the others. Somers would say to himself: 'There are fifty million people in Great Britain, and they would nearly all be against me. Let them."[25]

Thinking through his experiences, Richard Somers realizes that he is cut off from the rest of the world and that he is "loose like a single timber of some wrecked ship, drifting over the face of the earth. Without a people, without a land."[26]

Somers sees the revolution which Kangaroo is planning as just another example of the mob spirit of the same kind that perpetrated the war and he determines to have nothing to do with it. Lawrence says,

> And Kangaroo? Kangaroo insisted on the old idea as hard as ever, though on the Power of Love rather than on the Submission and Sacrifice of Love. He wanted to take his revenge in an odour of sanctification and Lily of the Valley essence. But he was the mob really: the <u>vengeful</u> mob. Oh, God the most terrifying of all things.[27]

Looking in this way upon Kangaroo's venture, Somers comes to the conclusion that his own desire is to get clear of the whole business.

> That was all he wanted: to get clear. Not to save humanity or to help humanity or to have anything to do with humanity. No--no. Kangaroo had been his last embrace with humanity. Now, all he wanted was to cut himself clear. To be clear of humanity altogether,

> to be alone. To be clear of love, and pity, and hate. To be alone from it all. To cut himself finally clear from the last encircling arm of the octopus humanity. To turn to the old dark gods, who had waited so long in the outer dark.[28]

The only reality, therefore, for Somers is the sacredness of the individual soul, in other words, the acceptance of the first principle of the doctrine of individuality. We have the principle stated, here, in his own words:

> Humanity could do as it liked: he did not care. So long as he could get his own soul clear. For he believed in the inward soul, in the profound unconsciousness of man. Not an ideal God. The ideal God is a proposition of the mental consciousness, all-too-limitedly human. 'No,' he said to himself. 'There <u>is</u> God. But forever dark, forever unrealizable: forever and forever. The unutterable name, because it can never have a name. The great living darkness which we represent by the glyph, God.[29]

Because it is impossible, according to the doctrine of individuality, to formulate an idea of the living self, man must be sensitive to the promptings of his passional impulses. The fountain of these impulses is the unknown. Lawrence says,

> There is this ever-present, living darkness inexhaustible and unknowable. It <u>is</u>. And it is all the God and the gods.
>
> And every <u>living</u> human soul is a well-head into this darkness of the living unutterable. Into every living soul wells up the darkness, the unutterable. And then there is travail of the visible with the

> invisible. Man is in travail with his own soul while ever his soul lives. Into his unconscious surges a new flood of the God-darkness, the living unutterable. And this unutterable is like a germ, a foetus with which he must travail, bringing it at last into utterance, into action, into being.[30]

In establishing his relationship with a woman, man must answer the dark god in her and she in him, and likewise in his relationships with other men they must all answer to the call of the dark god. So far as man's relationship with woman is concerned Lawrence has succeeded in showing that it has reference to a higher principle. Women in Love and parts of Kangaroo show conclusively that man's fulfillment must be based on marriage. When it comes to the relationship between man and man Lawrence is unable to demonstrate what the basis of this relationship must be. He says,

> And so it is. Life is so wonderful and complex, and always relative. A man's soul is a perpetual call and answer. He can never be the call and answer in one: between the dark soul of woman, and the opposite dark soul of man: and finally, between the souls of man and man, strangers to one another, but answerers. So it is forever, the eternal weaving of calls and answers, and the fabric of life woven and perishing again. But the calls never cease, and the answers never fail for long. And when the fabric becomes grey and machine-made, some strange clarion-call makes men start to smash it up. So it is.[31]

To say that, "So it is," is not very convincing.

The relationship described above is that which would satisfy Somers, if such could come to pass between Kangaroo and himself, and then among the other men of Australia. But what does Kangaroo offer him? He offers Somers the old bond of love. We have elsewhere studied (see Chapter IV of this study) the breakdown which occurs between Somers and Kangaroo, a breakdown which ends with the death of the latter. Lawrence's dramatic account of Kangaroo's death and Somers' stubborn refusal to acknowledge that he loves Kangaroo serve as it were to emphasize the idea that a lasting relationship between man and man cannot be based on love. Lawrence says quite explicitly, "Man's love for man? Yes, yes, but only in the separate darkness of man's love for the present, unknowable God. Human love as a god-act, very well. Human love as a ritual offering to the God who is out of the light, well and good. But human love as an all in all, ah, no, the strain and the unreality of it were too great."[32]

Here the novel comes to an end. Harriet and Somers leave Australia without establishing any lasting relationships and without Somers having taken part in any successful impersonal male activity. The novel instead of solving these problems actually raises more significant questions.

It raises the questions of man's relation to the unknown so that it can work through him; in short, it raises the whole question of Lawrence's religious ideas, ideas which have at their core the doctrine of individuality. Artistically, Lawrence has succeeded in Kangaroo in showing that a man must first win through to the recognition of the importance of his individual soul and that one of the conditions of such recognition is the establishment of a bond between a man and a woman, a bond of true marriage, but he has failed to show how a man is to join with other men in creative activity. He has, it is true, indicated rather superficially that the relationship among men must be based on their mutual recognition of the "dark god", but he has not satisfactorily dealt with this conception. Lovat Somers learns undeniably, in the novel, how to stand alone and yet be together with his wife, but these two lessons cannot bring him complete fulfillment no matter how thoroughly he has mastered them. What does a man do after he has learned to stand alone and in perfect balance with his wife? How does he answer the promptings of the God-urge in him and translate this urge into visible action or creation? In trying to answer these questions it is necessary for Lawrence to create a new religion with its own dark gods,

its own ritual, its own symbols. It is this new religion that we see in the next novel, The Plumed Serpent.

The Plumed Serpent is a novel in which the artistic creative imagination is almost without limits. As a coherent work of art, however, the novel cannot be rated very highly. The imaginative power is there, but the acute and penetrating insight of the artist is overshadowed by the flights of imagination. This is not to say that there is nothing which is artistically noteworthy in The Plumed Serpent, but the truth is that Lawrence sets for himself an immensely difficult task and his artistic vision fails him.

The task which Lawrence sets for himself is nothing less than the creation of a new religion based only in part on the ancient gods of the Aztecs. He tries to make the religion credible to the end that the reader will, after he has read the novel, see that he himself might conceivably worship in the manner which is described in the book. I say the novel is a failure because no reader really believes that the new religion is or will be possible in this modern world. Even if a reader did believe that the religion which The Plumed Serpent expounds were possible, the novel would still be a failure for the reasons which we are now

going to examine.

The main failure in The Plumed Serpent is to be found in the make-up of the characters who carry the burden of Lawrence's thinking. These characters are four in number: Don Ramon, Don Cipriano, Kate Leslie, and Dona Carlota. These four characters may be further divided into two couples: Don Ramon and his wife; and Cipriano and Kate. The ideal should be seen in one of the pairs, but the novel fails to establish either as the norm to be desired. From the beginning we are inclined to think that Don Ramon will ultimately come to his fulfillment, but once we are shown the relationship which exists between him and Dona Carlota we realize that he is doomed. Yet Lawrence gives him the supremely important role of bringing to birth the whole new religion, in fact he makes Don Ramon a visible symbol of the god, Quetzalcoatl. We cannot believe that a man who has failed so utterly to find his own sensual fulfillment can ever be the saviour of the race. Near the end of the novel, Kate Leslie gives expression to the Lawrencean idea that the starting point for any kind of new life must be a permanent relationship between man and woman. She says,

...Kate herself had convinced herself of one thing,

> finally: that the clue to all living and to all moving-on into new living lay in the vivid blood-relation between man and woman. A man and a woman in this togetherness were the clue to all present living and future possibility. Out of this clue of togetherness between a man and a woman, the whole new life arose. It was the quick of the whole.[33]

Don Ramon falls far short of this ideal; how, then, can he hope to create a religion which will allow other men and women their fulfillment?

Don Ramon senses his own weakness and it is his own awareness of it that makes it so difficult to accept him in the role which Lawrence assigns to him in the novel. "Senora," he says on one occasion to Kate, "I have not a very great respect for myself. Woman and I have failed with one another, and it is a bad failure to have in the middle of oneself."[34] Then he goes on,

> Who am I, even to talk about Quetzalcoatl, when my heart is hollow with anger against the woman I have married and the children she bore me?--We never met in our souls, she and I....And now we can never meet; she turns to her crucified Jesus, and I to my uncrucified and uncrucifiable Quetzalcoatl...[35]

Don Ramon's failure to establish a pure relationship between him and his wife is more the fault of the wife than of the husband. Carlota is a woman who exalts herself in the Church. She is a very devout Catholic and as such

becomes symbolic of the Christian religion so far as the novel is concerned. Her death, and her failure with Don Ramon establish Lawrence's position that the Christian religion can do no more good in Mexico, nor anywhere in the world. Dona Carlota is vividly described by Lawrence and the novel develops her character consistently and fully. But she serves no great purpose for Lawrence has, in previous novels, shown convincingly the failure of the Christian religion. That he can do so again in The Plumed Serpent is of no great account for what we are really concerned with is the religion which he would put in place of Christianity and it is this latter attempt that results in failure.

Artistically, however, it is necessary for Lawrence to show that Christianity can no longer serve the needs of men; it is necessary in order to provide the reason for the new movement which Don Ramon initiates. There is some question as to whether or not all the detestable features of the Mexican citilization may be traced back to the inadequacy of the Christian Church, but if we take Dona Carlota as being typical of the Mexican we may, I think, accept Lawrence's diagnosis. Certainly, the passivity with which the Mexicans accept their poverty and

their inability to face up to their responsibilities indicate an idealization of meekness. Lawrence says,

> Oh, if there is one thing men need to learn, but the Mexican Indians especially, it is to collect each man his own soul together deep inside him, and to abide by it. The Church, instead of helping men to this, pushes them more and more into a soft, emotional helplessness, with the unpleasant sensuous gratification of feeling themselves victims, victimized, victimized, but at the same time with the lurking sardonic consciousness that in the end a victim is stronger than the victimizer. In the end, the victims pull down their victimizer, like a pack of hyenas on an unwary lion. They know it. Cursed are the falsely meek, for they are inheriting the earth.[36]

Before Don Ramon can revive the new god, he must rid the village church of the old god. In the chapter called "Auto Da Fe", the images are removed from the church and are taken to an island in the lake where they are burned. The whole chapter is a very powerful piece of writing. Lawrence's description of the procession as it moves out of the church and boards the big <u>canoa</u> is realistic and at the same time symbolically very potent. The description of the arrival on the island and the subsequent burning of the Christian symbols of worship is one of the most powerful scenes in the whole novel.

> Slowly the procession went up again of the dishevelled island, past the couple of huts, where a red cock was crowing among the litter, and over to rocks, beyond the bushes, on the far side.

> The side facing Sayula was all rock, naked and painful to tread on. In a rocky hollow at the water's edge, tall stones had been put up on end, with iron bars across the top, like a grill. Underneath, a pile of faggots ready; and at the side, a pile of faggots.
>
> The images, the glass box of the great Dead Christ, were laid on the iron bars of the grill, in a pathetic cluster altogether. The crucifix was leaned against them. It was noon, the heat and the light were fierce and erect. But already down the lake clouds were pushing up fantastically.
>
> Beyond the water, beyond the glare, the village looked like a mirage, with its trees and villages and white church towers.
>
> Men who had come in boats crowded on the rocks of the little amphitheatre. In silence, Ramon kindled shreds of cane and ocote, with a burning-glass. Little hasty flames like young snakes arose in the solid sunlight, with vapour of smoke. He set fire to the carefully-arranged pyramid of faggots beneath the grill-table of the images.
>
> There was a crackling, and a puffing of whitish smoke, the sweet scent of ocote, and orange-red tongues of half-substantial flame were leaping up in the hot white air. Hot breaths blew suddenly, sudden flames gushed up, and the ocote, full of sweet resin, began to roar. The glass of the great box emitted strange, painful yelps as it splintered and fell tinkling. Between the iron bars, browning flames pushed up among the images, which at once went black. The little vestments of silk and satin withered in a moment to blackness, the caked wounds of paint bubbled black.[37]

This description proceeds in the same kind of vivid and concrete manner until the coals of the fire are "shovelled and dropped down a steep hole". And thus the old god is destroyed; the time is now ripe for the entrance of the new.

It is as if Lawrence were conscious himself that something has gone wrong in the novel for at this moment, after the burning of the images, he enlarges the patheon by bringing in another god and a goddess. Don Cipriano is to be the living Huitzilopochtli, and Kate Leslie is to become Malintzi. Apparently having Don Ramon serve as the living Quetzalcoatl is not enough. But the introduction of the new deities poses several problems. We at once question whether or not these individuals who are to serve as symbols are in any special way deserving of the veneration which they are about to be granted.

If we look at the Mexican general, Cipriano, we are even less sure that he can fulfil his role than we are willing to admit is the truth in the case of Don Ramon. Thus far in the novel there is little that recommends him to us; he has stood in the side-lines as Don Ramon has played in the center of the stage. Cipriano, in his faded general's uniform, has been a sort of deputy to Don Ramon, but he has not revealed any distinctive qualities which would single him out as an archetype. He has, it is true, a strange effect on Kate Leslie, but even she senses that Don Cipriano is rather ridiculous in his new role. We hear her saying to herself:

> For heaven's sake let me get out of this, and back to simple human people. I loathe the very sound of Quetzalcoatl and Huitzilopochtli. I would die rather than be mixed up in it any more. Horrible, really, both Ramon and Cipriano. And they want to put it over on me, with their high-flown bunk, and their Malintzi. Malintzi! I am Kate Forrester, really. I am neither Kate Leslie nor Kate Taylor. I am sick of these men putting names over me. I was born Kate Forrester, and I shall die Kate Forrester. I want to go home. Loathsome, really, to be called Malintzi.--I've had it put over me.[38]

Still, in a relatively short time, Kate agrees to accept her place in the new pantheon as the wife of Cipriano. Her acceptance is not convincing; her changed attitude is not believable. Lawrence's description of Kate sitting beside Don Cipriano in the new church and feeling that her womanhood is being reborn does not carry with it a note of conviction. He writes,

> As she sat in that darkened church in the intense perfume of flowers, in the seat of Malintzi, watching the bud of her life united with his, between the feet of the idol, and feeling his dark hand softly holding her own, with the soft, deep Indian heat, she felt her own childhood coming back on her. The years seemed to be reeling away in great circles, falling away from her.[39]

Even Don Ramon is somewhat surprised at this marriage--because, after all, neither he nor the reader were properly prepared for it. One has the feeling that Lawrence is forcing the issue in order to correct a fault in the whole

structure of the novel.

The final chapter of the book is most insistent on the idea that it is best for Kate to have married Cipriano and on the idea that their relationship will be a vital and a permanent one. Kate thinks over her situation and comes to the conclusion that she can never go back to the London drawing-room. "It is all very well for a woman to cultivate her ego," says Lawrence,

> her individuality. It is all very well for her to despise love, or to love love as a cat loves a mouse, that it plays with as long as possible, before devouring it to vivify her own individuality and voluptuously fill the belly of her own ego.[40]

And when he says this, Lawrence is himself repudiating the very doctrine which he wants most to teach. It is most disturbing to find Kate saying,

> No!...My ego and my individuality are not worth <u>that</u> ghastly price. I'd better abandon some of my ego, and sink some of my individuality...[41]

Ursula in <u>The Rainbow</u> or in <u>Women in Love</u> would never have been capable of this kind of compromise with her individuality. But Kate Leslie is made to say these things and is presumably to be regarded as having opened the door to her fulfillment.

<u>The Plumed Serpent</u>, therefore, comes to a very unsatisfactory end. Looking back at the elaborate and

highly picturesque actions which have filled the preceding pages of the novel, one wonders what they have all added up to. The Mexicans, for whom the new gods have been revived, are forgotten and the man-and-man relationship has not really been probed. The way to knowledge of the dark gods has not been clarified; instead, the whole issue has been even more obscured than it was in Kangaroo.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE NEW TENDERNESS

THE NEW TENDERNESS

The two works by D.H. Lawrence which we are going to examine at this time reveal that he finally succeeds in his attempt to place the doctrine of individuality within a significant religious context. If we recall the history of Lawrence's development as a writer we will see that he begins with an intense awareness of his own being; he discovers in marriage a relationship which serves to liberate his individuality; and because he is so intensely alive, himself, he tries to share with others what he has found. But as he studies the society in which he grew up and which now surrounds him, he sees those forces which are inimical to the development of his individuality. The greatest barrier is, for him, Christianity and he devotes all his energies to undermining its foundations. Nevertheless, he must have something to replace Christianity and so he revives the dark god which is forever "Unknowable". For a time, the "Unknowable" god is symbolized for him in the Holy Ghost, but later he tries to make his god more tangible. The result, as we have seen in our study of <u>The Plumed Serpent</u>, is disastrous. Lawrence, finally, realizes that a new religion cannot be established without a great effort on the part of all mankind and he goes back to his

original message which is the necessity for a vital relationship between man and woman. Until this relationship is established, nothing else is possible! In a letter to Witter Bynner, Lawrence writes:

> The leader of men is a back number. After all, at the back of the hero is the militant ideal; and the militant ideal, or the ideal militant seems to me also a cold egg...the leader-cum-follower relationship is a bore. And the new relationship will be some sort of tenderness, sensitive, between men and men and between men and women, and not the one up one down, lead on I follow, ich dien sort of business.[1]

It is the assertion of this principle that we have in both Lady Chatterley's Lover and The Man Who Died.

I: Lady Chatterley's Lover

Lady Chatterley's Lover is a difficult book to write about because it represents the furthest that Lawrence ever went in attempting to deal with the relationships between man and woman. He himself says,

> ...I am in a quandary about my novel, Lady Chatterley's Lover. It's what the world would call very improper. But you know it's not really improper--I always labour at the same thing, to make the sex-relation valid and precious, instead of shameful. And this novel is the furthest I've gone. To me it is beautiful and tender and frail as the naked self is, and I shrink very much even from having it typed. Probably the typist would want to interfere.[2]

If we examine Lady Chatterley's Lover we will see that the consideration of the relationship among men which haunted Lawrence in Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo, and The Plumed Serpent is entirely put aside in favor of the relationship between man and woman. The fierce denunciations of Christianity which mark his earlier works and the idea of a new religion for modern society are absent from Lady Chatterley's Lover and the novelist marshalls all the resources of his art "to make the sex-relation valid and precious." As early as 1914, Lawrence had already written,

> I think the only re-sourcing of art, revivifying it, is to make it more the joint work of man and woman. I think the one thing to do, is for men to have courage to draw nearer to women, expose themselves to them, and be altered by them: and for women to accept and admit men. That is the start--by bringing themselves together, men and women--revealing themselves each to the other, gaining great blind knowledge and suffering and joy, which it will take a big further lapse of civilisation to exploit and work out. Because the source of all life and knowledge is in man and woman, and the source of all living is in the interchange and the meeting and mingling of these two: man-life and woman-life, man-knowledge and woman-knowledge, man-being and woman-being.[3]

In this study, however, we are not concerned with a close examination of Lawrence's views on sex as they appear in Lady Chatterley's Lover. What we are concerned

with is in showing that the doctrine of individuality is still the underlying doctrine in Lawrence's thinking and that as is the case with The Rainbow and with Women in Love the doctrine is made clear in the makeups of the characters in the novel. Sir Clifford Chatterley, Connie Chatterley, and Mellors, therefore, are the people in the novel who demand our attention.

In spite of the title of the book, the main character in Lady Chatterley's Lover is Connie Chatterley herself. It is Connie who puts the doctrine of individuality to the test and Mellors, her lover, is the man who helps her to her fulfillment. But the battle is not fought by the two lovers in alliance with one another; their struggles are, for the most part, individual affairs and it is Connie's struggle on which Lawrence concentrates his efforts.

The novel begins with a description of Connie Chatterley's world as it appears after the first World War. This case is symbolic of all men and women who had to gather the pieces of their lives after that catastrophe and attempt somehow to live on. The situation in which Connie finds herself is an extremely difficult one for, on the one hand, she is married and has, therefore, definite

responsibilities to her husband; on the other hand, she is still a young woman who has a definite responsibility towards her integral self. Her story is the story of a woman struggling to preserve her individuality in the face of a host of hostile forces. It is for this reason that her relationship with Mellors has all the marks of unconventionality. Connie, Lawrence says, must not sacrifice her life for the sake of social conventions. But Lawrence's insight goes even further for in describing Connie's affair with Michaelis he reveals that merely breaking the rules of conventional behavior will not bring about fulfillment. Michaelis is really a tragic figure, like Sir Clifford Chatterley, for neither of these men has any real vitality in him. Connie places both of them in the same category when she says, "Michaelis was a heroic rat, and Clifford was very much of a poodle showing off."[4]

It is not easy for Connie to break with Sir Clifford and it is not until she realizes that Clifford does not have any warmth in him that she decides she has never really cared for him. The bitterness she feels towards Clifford may be seen in the following passage:

> He, as was inevitable in the course of time, took all the service for granted. It was natural he should.

> And yet, deep inside herself, a sense of injustice, of being defrauded, began to burn in Connie. The physical sense of injustice is a dangerous feeling, once it is awakened. It must have outlet, or it eats away the one in whom it is aroused. Poor Clifford, he was not to blame. His was the greater misfortune. It was all part of the general catastrophe.
>
> And yet was he not in a way to blame? This lack of warmth, this lack of the simple, warm, physical contact, was he not to blame for that? He was never really warm, nor even kind, only thoughtful, considerate, in a well-bred, cold sort of way! But never warm as a man can be warm to a woman, as even Connie's father could be warm to her, with the warmth of a man who did himself well, and intended to, but who still could comfort a woman with a bit of his masculine glow.[5]

What Connie yearns for, we can see, is really the "new tenderness". It is this feeling that is lacking in the relationship between modern men and women. Instead of feeling tenderness towards each other, men and women feel a secret hatred for one another.

Connie's lack of a warm relationship with her husband and her failure to find any real warmth in her affair with Michaelis soon begin to take their toll of her own vitality. When she visits a doctor in London he tells her that she is spending her vitality without making any. Just previous to her visit Lawrence describes her as follows:

> The days seemed to grind by, with curious painfulness, yet nothing happened. Only she was getting thinner;

> even the housekeeper noticed it, and asked her about herself. Even Tommy Dukes insisted she was not well, though she said she was all right. Only she began to be afraid of the ghastly white tombstones, that peculiar loathsome whiteness of Carrara marble, detestable as false teeth, which stuck up on the hillside, under Tevershall church, and which she saw with such grim plainness from the park. The bristling of the hideous false teeth of tombstones on the hill affected her with a grisly kind of horror. She felt the time not far off when she would be buried there, added to the ghastly host under the tombstones and the monuments, in these filthy Midlands.[6]

It is clear that if Connie is going to live she must somehow tap the sources of vital life, that any further attempt to continue to draw her vitality from her existence in Wragby will result in disaster.

Significantly, she begins to go for walks in the wood, the wood which is symbolic of instinctual life and which, at the same time, is the home of the gamekeeper, Mellors. In turning her activities towards the wood, Connie repudiates that society for which Wragby stands. She repudiates all those endless analyses of human consciousness in which Sir Clifford is so fond of engaging; in short, she begins to free herself of that kind of life in which the intelligence assumes the dominant role in the whole human psyche. In her cooperation with Sir Clifford, in helping to write his stories, Connie has

tried to merge her integral self with his and in so doing she has been guilty of violating the basic tenet of the doctrine of individuality. When she makes up her mind to break with Clifford, she takes the first step in the direction of fulfillment.

As she walks in the wood, Connie learns that she can stand alone. This fact is implied by her desire to obtain her own key to the "little hut not far from John's Well, where the pheasants are reared".[7] Her achievement of this degree of aloneness coincides with a renewed interest in the gamekeeper and from this point, in the novel, the developing relationship between Connie and Mellors becomes paramount.

Mellors, in his identification with the forest, the chickens and pheasants which he looks after, and the dog which is his constant companion is himself symbolic of the instinctual life. But this symbolism is only outward for quite early in the story we are presented with a scene in which Mellors is shown just having killed a cat. This scene is Lawrence's way of informing the reader that the instinctual life in Mellors is being suppressed, that he has, as it were, killed the instinctual life and has only retreated into the forest to be away from other people.

The history of Mellors which Sir Clifford recounts confirms the view that he has become a gamekeeper in order to escape from society, particularly from his overweening wife. Connie is, of course, attracted to this strange man who has voluntarily chosen the life of a gamekeeper in preference to some more socially respectable position. The quality in Mellors' character which has its greatest effect on Connie is that of his "otherness". Mellors impresses her with his remoteness, his standoffishness, and his apparent self-sufficiency. It is only later that Connie learns about the painful route which Mellors has travelled to his present state of apparent tranquillity. The re-discovery of the instinctual life is destined to be accomplished by both Connie and Mellors in cooperation with, and opposition to, each other. Neither Connie nor Mellors is fulfilled when they first become acquainted.

Connie's growing acquaintance with Mellors brings about an increased aversion towards Sir Clifford. Lawrence says,

> Connie was surprised at her own feeling of aversion for Clifford. What is more, she felt she had always really disliked him. Not hate: there was no passion in it. But a profound physical dislike. Almost it seemed to her, she had married him because she

> disliked him, in a secret, physical sort of way. But of course, she had married him really because in a mental way he attracted her and excited her. He had seemed, in some way, her master, beyond her.
>
> Now the mental excitement had worn itself out and collapsed, and she was aware only of the physical aversion. It rose up in her from her depths: and she realized how it had been eating her life away.[8]

In thus analyzing her contempt for Clifford, Connie reveals how utterly Clifford has failed in his own life and how those ideals by which he has tried to live his life fall short of the doctrine of individuality.

Sir Clifford breaks the tenets of the doctrine in several ways. In the first place, his writing really amounts to nothing because, as a creative activity, it is not based on a sound relationship between him and Connie. His attempt to base his relationship with Connie on perfect intimacy is also a denial of the principle of otherness. His attempt to live a purely mental life without an organic basis is a denial of the passional impulses. Finally, when he turns to the mines, he puts all his faith in the machine but, as Lawrence so artfully informs us, the machine lets him down.

With such a man as Sir Clifford, Connie can obviously have no chance for fulfillment and her interest in Mellors is, therefore, not surprising. Of course, she does not have an easy time of it with Mellors, either,

for Mellors, as we have already pointed out has retreated from society and sheltered his vulnerable self in the security of the wood. Thus Connie's entrance into his life is viewed by Mellors with the suspicion and wariness which are characteristic of a wild creature. This is why Mellors assumes that air of stand-offishness which at once attracts and repels Connie. Nevertheless, Mellors makes his contact with Connie and from then on the two of them must work out their relationship together. As Mellors watches Connie crossing the park on her way back to Wragby, we read,

> He stood back and watched her going into the dark, against the pallor of the horizon. Almost with bitterness he watched her go. She had connected him up again, when he had wanted to be alone. She had cost him that bitter privacy of a man who at last wants only to be alone.[9]

Mellors stops to analyze those forces which have driven him to seek the seclusion of the woods and his analysis reveals the depth of meaning which Lawrence is communicating in the novel.

> It was not woman's fault, nor even love's fault, nor the fault of sex. The fault lay there, out there, in those evil electric lights and diabolical rattlings of engines. There, in the world of the mechanical greedy, greedy mechanism and mechanized greed, sparkling with lights and gushing hot metal and roaring with traffic, there lay the vast evil

> thing, ready to destroy the wood, and the bluebells would spring no more. All vulnerable things must perish under the rolling and running of iron.[10]

We have here an indictment of the whole industrial machine and what we should notice is that what Mellors bemoans is that the machine will finally destroy the tenderness of man's contact with woman. Lawrence says,

> He thought with infinite tenderness of the woman. Poor forlorn thing, she was nicer than she knew, and oh! so much too nice for the tough lot she was in contact with. Poor thing, she too had some of the vulnerability of the wild hyacinths, she wasn't all tough rubber-goods and platinum, like the modern girl. And they would do her in! As sure as life, they would do her in, as they do in all naturally tender life. Tender! Somewhere she was tender, tender with a tenderness of the growing hyacinths, something that has gone out of the celluloid women of to-day. But he would protect her with his heart for a little while. For a little while, before the insentient iron world and the Mammon of mechanized greed did them both in, her as well as him.[11]

The social implications of Mellors' thinking is given explicitly in these words:

> Oh, if only there were other men to be with, to fight that sparkling electric Thing outside there, to preserve the tenderness of life, the tenderness of women, and the natural riches of desire. If only there were men to fight side by side with! But the men were all outside there, glorying in the Thing, triumphing or being trodden down in the rush of mechanized greed or of greedy mechanism.[12]

Before Connie can experience any degree of real

fulfillment she must, according to the doctrine of individuality, allow her instinctual nature to have free play. Thus so long as she regards her love making with Mellors from "the ramparts of her mind" she is denied the full sensual consummation. It is only later, after she has learned to suspend her mental consciousness and to yield entirely to her passionate being, that she realizes "the depth of the other thing in her". "Another self was alive in her," says Lawrence,

> burning molten and soft in her womb and bowels, and with this self she adored him. She adored him till her knees were weak as she walked. In her womb and bowels she was flowing and live now and vulnerable, and helpless in adoration of him as the most naive woman. "It feels like a child," she said to herself; "it feels like a child in me." And so it did, as if her womb, that had always been shut, had opened and filled with new life, almost a burden, yet lovely.
>
> "If I had a child!" she thought to herself; "if I had him inside me as a child!"--and her limbs turned molten at the thought, and she realized the immense difference between having a child to oneself, and having a child to a man whom one's bowels yearned towards. The former seemed in a sense ordinary: but to have a child to a man whom one adored in one's bowels and one's womb, it made her feel she was very different from her old self, and as if she was sinking deep, deep to the centre of all womanhood and the sleep of creation.[13]

When Connie returns home to listen to Clifford read she thinks,

> How extraordinary it was! How extraordinary he was, bent there over the book, queer and rapacious and civilized, with broad shoulders and no real legs! What a strange creature, with the sharp, cold inflexible will of some bird, and no warmth, no warmth at all! One of those creatures of the afterwards, that have no soul, but an extra-alert will, cold will. She shuddered a little, afraid of him. But then, the soft warm flame of life was stronger than he, and the real things were hidden from him.[14]

Connie has now discovered what she calls "the real things" and she no longer bothers her consciousness with the shortcomings of Clifford. The tenderness which she feels for Mellors admits her into the communion of wonder which she experiences so that,

> She clung to him, with a hiss of wonder that was almost awe, terror. He held her close, but he said nothing. He would never say anything. She crept nearer to him, nearer, only to be near to the sensual wonder of him.[15]

Thus the instinctual life is given unsullied passage in both Connie and Mellors and the naive woman and man are reborn in them.

The relationship between Connie and Mellors is developed by Lawrence against the background of Sir Clifford's reorganization of the mining industry and against his view that it is "the function" which "determines the individual". In order to perpetuate the name of

Chatterley, Sir Clifford is even willing to allow Connie to bear the child of another man on the one condition that the father is "a healthy man not below normal intelligence". If any character contravenes the doctrine of individuality it is Sir Clifford when he says, "The individual hardly matters. It is a question of which function you are brought up to and adapted to."[16] It is this attitude that has perpetrated the ugliness of industrialism and which has killed the intrinsic individuality in man. Connie speaks Lawrence's own thoughts when she exclaims:

> Incarnate ugliness, and yet alive! What would become of them all? Perhaps with the passing of the coal they would disappear again, off the face of the earth. They had appeared out of nowhere in their thousands, when the coal had called for them. Perhaps they were only weird fauna of the coal-seams. Creatures of another reality, they were elementals, serving the elements of coal, as the metal-workers were elementals, serving the element of iron. Men not men, but animus of coal and iron and clay. Fauna of the elements, carbon, iron, silicon: elementals. They had perhaps some of the weird, inhuman beauty of minerals, the lustre of coal, the weight and blueness and resistance of iron, the transparency of glass. Elemental creatures, weird and distorted, of the mineral world! They belonged to the coal, the iron, the clay, as fish belong to the sea and worms to dead wood. The anima of mineral disintegration![17]

The question we must now ask is how can man save

himself from this ugliness which he has created? For Lawrence's answer we must look at the meaning of Lady Chatterley's Lover as a whole. Mark Spilka has, I think, summarized the meaning of the novel when he writes:

> Just what does Lawrence discover, finally, in Lady Chatterley's Lover? The answer is obviously multiple, but stated in its broadest terms, he arrives here at a deeper and clearer understanding of what a "change in being" ultimately involves. He carries his readers along, for example, to a fuller vision of physical life, as he concentrates upon the wakening of the "phallic consciousness" in Constance Chatterley; he fortifies the surface beauty of vision with something deeper, with "warm, live beauty of contact". But more than this, he resurrects that sense of healthy reverence towards love which made his early work so promising; the old mysticism of the middle period seems largely swept away; the emphasis on love as a mystic meeting ground, as a gateway to the beyond, is now replaced by a sense of communion, by a kind of incorporated or applied mysticism, so that the experience of love is delivered, in much simpler terms, as religious in itself. And indeed, this sense of religious communion pervades all the sexual passages; so that to call them "naturalistic descriptions of the sex-act," with Harry Moore, or to speak, as Diana Trilling does, of the revelations of biology, is to miss the whole tenor and purpose of the reading experience. Here life refreshes life, and the universe itself becomes complete as Connie rushes home, one night, from Mellors' hut, and feels the bulge and surge of surrounding trees, or the heave of the slope beside her house. This is the "greater life of the body," the connection with the religious sweep in life itself, which Lawrence also tries to evoke in The Man Who Died.[18]

We must agree with Mark Spilka that Lady Chatterley's

Lover is a great achievement as a novel and that in it Lawrence does succeed in accomplishing what he set out to do. If we look back at Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo, and The Plumed Serpent we see that Lawrence recognized the weakness which these novels contain. And though he had given expression to the kind of vital relationship which should exist between men and women in Women in Love, he felt compelled to do so again in Lady Chatterley's Lover. We must also recognize that in Lady Chatterley's Lover Lawrence still works within the basic framework of the doctrine of individuality and puts this doctrine in a significant social context which makes the novel vitally important for the modern age.

II: The Man Who Died

The Man Who Died may be said to contain Lawrence's final artistic vision for in this work he combines his criticism of Christianity with a simultaneous assertion of the doctrine of individuality. In addition, the setting of the story does not limit its application to any particular geographical area but makes the work apply to the whole race of mankind. The Man Who Died represents

a heroic effort on the part of Lawrence to give us his artistic vision in the briefest and most compact form. This story is the last piece of his important fictional prose and it shows Lawrence at what is probably his best. The content of The Man Who Died is nothing new for the ideas which it embodies had long since been conceived by Lawrence and voiced in a great variety of works. What is new, however, is Lawrence's successful fusion of his ideas into a highly unified work of literature. Let us now look more closely at the story to see how Lawrence develops his ideas.

The man who died gives us Lawrence's criticism of Christianity when he returns to the tomb and talks to Madeleine. "My triumph," he says,

> "is that I am not dead. I have outlived my mission, and know no more of it. It is my triumph. I have survived the day of my interference, and am still a man. I am young still, Madeleine, not even come to middle age. I am glad all that is over, and the day of my interference is done. The teacher and the saviour are dead in me; now I can go about my business, into my own single life." (Italics mine)[19]

What the man who died realizes is that he must live his life within the limits of his physical body. He tells Madeleine, "I wanted to be greater than the limits of my hands and feet, so I brought betrayal on myself."[20]

In speaking these words the man who died reveals that he accepts his body for what it is and now looks upon the desires of the body as something good which belong to the body; he looks forward to the time when he will be able to mingle his body with the woman who is "not greedy to give, not greedy to take".

The man who died also comes to accept his aloneness and as he looks at the young gamecock he recognizes that he was mistaken in denying the individuality of all things. "Strange is the phenomenal world," he says, "dirty and clean together! And I am the same. Yet I am apart! And life bubbles variously Why should I have wanted it to bubble all alike? What a pity I preached to them!"[21] In these few words we have Lawrence's indictment of Christianity and his assertion of the doctrine of individuality; the artistic economy with which he accomplishes his purpose is worthy of admiration.

The main threat to the man who died is the compulsion which society wishes to put upon him; this is the greatest enemy of the doctrine of individuality. Lawrence says:

> So he went his way, and was alone. But the way of the world was past belief, as he saw the strange entanglement of passions and circumstance and compulsion everywhere, but always the dread insomnia of compulsion. It was fear, the ultimate fear of

> death, that made men mad. So always he must move on, for if he stayed, his neighbours wound the strangling of their fear and bullying round him. There was nothing he could touch, for all, in a mad assertion of the ego, wanted to put a compulsion on him, and violate his intrinsic solitude. It was the mania of cities and societies and hosts, to lay a compulsion upon a man, upon all men. For men and women alike were mad with the egoistic fear of their own nothingness. And he thought of his own mission, how he had tried to lay the compulsion of love on all men. And the old nausea came back on him. For there was no contact without a subtle attempt to inflict a compulsion. And already he had been compelled even into death. The nausea of the old wound broke out afresh, and he looked again on the world with repulsion, dreading its mean contacts.[22]

In having accepted his aloneness the man who died has fulfilled the first principle of the doctrine of individuality. But in showing us the achievement of this stage in the character of the man, Lawrence has also pointed out what he considers to be the major weaknesses in the Christian religion, namely, its emphasis on the spirituality of man, its idealization of self-sacrifice, its insistence on the oneness of all mankind, and its doctrine of self-willed love. It will help us to appreciate Lawrence's genius if we note that he does all these things in less than fifty pages of print.

The second half of <u>The Man Who Died</u> tells the story of the Priestess of Isis, how she accepts the man as the

lost Osiris, and how they both come to their fulfillment. The relationship between them is developed with constant reference to the temple in which the Priestess worships the Goddess Isis. Thus developed, the relationship is given a religious context and their sexual union later in which both man and woman experience their sensual consummation becomes itself an act of communion. Mark Spilka comments on this aspect of Lawrence's vision as follows:

> For the young woman takes the stranger for the dead Osiris, and drawn forth by her tenderness, and by his own need to escape from death, he accepts the role and meets her in the mystery of the reborn god. Within the sanctity of her temple, she annoints his wounds with oil, enfolds him in her embrace, and revives him with living warmth; then, as shock after shock of desire runs through him, he returns her embrace and achieves his living wholeness. As he tells us later: "This is the great atonement, the being in touch. The gray sea and the rain, the wet narcissus and the woman I wait for, the invisible Isis and the unseen sun are all in touch, and at one." So he decides to build his life on the "deep-folded, penetrable rock of the living woman," and their contact is fulfilled as the months draw on.
>
> All this is more than sexuality, per se: the "invisible Isis" and the "unseen sun" mean godly vitality, or the phallic power within man and woman which Lawrence saw as a force for creative labor; and the "rock of the living woman" means phallic marriage itself, or the first element of union in mankind; while "being in touch" is the soul's transcendence of merely finite being, its contact with the living God through life-responsibility, nourishing love, and the wakening of the whole corpus of human consciousness. The prophet speaks, in fact, of the "greater day of the human consciousness," and

he "rises to the Father" (to godly vitality) through this complex combination of change and achievement.[23]

There are several qualities in the relationship between the lady of Isis and the man who died which should be noted. The first quality is that of tenderness, the tenderness which permeates both Lady Chatterley's Lover and The Man Who Died. As a young girl, we are told, the lady shrank from the "eagle-like rapacity" of Caesar for she was like the lotus blossom which "will not answer to all the bright heat of the sun." This quality of tenderness is recognized by the man who died when he says to himself:

> "Shall I give myself into this touch? Shall I give myself into this touch? Men have tortured me to death with their touch. Yet this girl of Isis is a tender flame of healing. I am a physician, yet I have no healing like the flame of this tender girl. The flame of this tender girl! Like the first pale crocus of the spring. How could I have been blind to the healing and the bliss in the crocus-like body of a tender woman! Ah, tenderness! More terrible and lovely than the death I died--".... "Dare I come into touch? For this is further than death. I have dared to let them lay hands on me and put me to death. But dare I come into this tender touch of life? Oh, this is harder--"[24]

We can see here that the man who died has reached a very crucial moment. Lawrence dramatizes this moment in the scene in which the woman of Isis annoints the man's wounds and brings back the memories of the old pain.

The second quality which characterizes the relationship is that of the recognition of otherness. As the man watches the woman in the rapture of her "female mysteries" before the goddess Isis, he says to himself:

> "How different she is from me, how strangely different! She is afraid of me, and my male difference. She is getting herself naked and clear of her fear. How sensitive and softly alive she is, with a life so different from mine! How beautiful with a soft strange courage, of life, so different from my courage of death! What a beautiful thing, like the heart of a rose, like the core of a flame. She is making herself completely penetrable. Ah! how terrible to fail her, or to trespass on her!"[25]

And so the man who died and the lady of Isis consummate their relationship. The man realizes that "this is beyond prayer" and they come together in "a passion of tenderness and consuming desire." Thus the man comes into touch, not only with the woman, but with the universe around him. Lawrence says,

> So, in the absolute stillness and fulness of touch, he slept in his cave while the dawn came. And after the dawn, the wind rose and brought a storn, with cold rain. So he stayed in his cave in the peace and delight of being in touch, delighting to hear the sea, and the rain on the earth, and to see one white-and-gold narcissus bowing wet, and still wet. And he said: "This is the great atonement, the being in touch. The gray sea and the rain, the wet narcissus and the woman I wait for, the invisible Isis and the unseen

sun are all in touch, and at one."[26]

In the days that follow the contact between the man and the woman is "perfected and fulfilled". The woman conceives the man's child and "the nightingale calls no more from the valley-bed".[27] Nevertheless, the man must leave for the "little life of jealousy and property" begins to threaten him once more. He tells the woman,

> "I must go now soon. Trouble is coming to me from the slaves. But I am a man, and the world is open. But what is between us is good, and is established. Be at peace. And when the nightingale calls again from your valley-bed, I shall come again, sure as Spring."[28]

Thus with this promise to return, the man who died leaves, and the story comes to an end. The last words of the man who died, as he drifts in a boat alone the coast with the current are these:

> "I have sowed the seed of my life and my resurrection, and put my touch forever upon the choice woman of this day, and I carry her perfume in my flesh like essence of roses. She is dear to me in the middle of my being. But the gold and flowing serpent is coiling up again, to sleep at the root of my tree."
>
> "So let the boat carry me. Tomorrow is another day."[29]

"The meaning of this passage," to use Mark Spilka's words once more,

> seems clear: through the prophet's resurrection comes social regeneration, since the "seed" of his life is the pagan-Christian child of the future, and "the gold and flowing serpent" means power, in the man himself, for further creative activity--while "day" can only be understood, in Laurentian terms, as the time for collective, purposive labor--for the resurrection, perhaps, of the Christian Church itself.[30]

Our discussion of The Man Who Died brings us to the end of this study of the religious ideas in the works of D.H. Lawrence. The fact that Lawrence's artistic vision has an essentially religious basis will have become abundantly clear. The influence of Christianity on Lawrence's thinking must be recognized in any serious attempt to evaluate his work, but we should not be led into regarding Lawrence's views as being merely a re-interpretation of the Christian religion. To say that "Lawrence is almost a Christian, after all" will not enable us to appreciate the real stature of Lawrence's achievement as a novelist. What must be emphasized is that so far as Lawrence is concerned the Christian religion must be reborn if it is once more going to give mankind a raison d'etre. What this rebirth would mean in sociological terms is something which Lawrence is not prepared to explain; what this rebirth should mean in

terms of the individual, Lawrence has, I feel, made very explicit.

Taken as a whole, the doctrine of individuality is an attempt to reassert the basic dignity of the human personality. The way in which the doctrine is to be implemented by society at large is not Lawrence's concern. He says,

> As a novelist, I feel it is the change inside the individual which is my real concern. The great social change interests me and troubles me, but it is not my field. I know a change is coming--and I know we must have a more generous, more human system based on the life values and not on the money values. That I know. But what steps to take I don't know. Other men know better.
>
> My field is to know the feelings inside a man, and to make new feelings conscious. What really torments civilised people is that they are full of feelings they know nothing about; they can't realise them, they can't fulfil them, they can't <u>live</u> them. And so they are tortured. It is like having energy you can't use--it destroys you. And feelings are a form of vital energy.
>
> I am convinced that the majority of people to-day have good, generous feelings which they can never know, never experience, because of some fear, some repression. I do not believe that people would be villains, thieves, murderers and sexual criminals if they were freed from legal restraint. On the contrary, I think the vast majority would be much more generous, good-hearted and decent if they felt they dared be. I am convinced that people want to be more decent, more good-hearted than our social system of money and grab allows them to be. The awful fight for money, into which we are all forced, hurts our good nature more than we can bear. I am sure this is true of a vast number of people.[31]

As a writer, Lawrence is content to let the matter rest here; it is up to the rest of mankind to create a society whose guiding principle will be the doctrine of individuality. D.H. Lawrence's hope for the future may still be stated in these words:

> Within the next fifty years the whole framework of our social life will be altered, will be greatly modified. The old world of our grandfathers is disappearing like thawing snow, and is as likely to cause a flood. What the world of our grandchildren will be, fifty years hence, we don't know. But in its social form it will be very different from our world of to-day. We've got to change. And in our power to change, in our capacity to make new intelligent adaptation to new conditions, in our readiness to admit and fulfill new needs, to give expression to new desires and new feelings, lies our hope and our health. Courage is the great word.[32]

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CHAPTER SIX

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